

THE REAL BOOK ABOUT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By Michael Gorham

Illustrated by Elinore Blaisdell

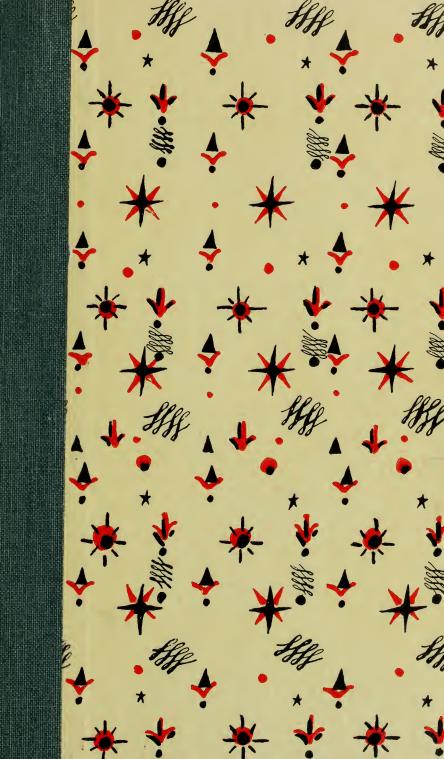
Abraham Lincoln was one of our greatest Americans—yet he began as a typical American boy of his time. He knew the rough, vital frontier life of his day; he grew up to be the greatest force in settling the most difficult problem that the young United States had ever faced.

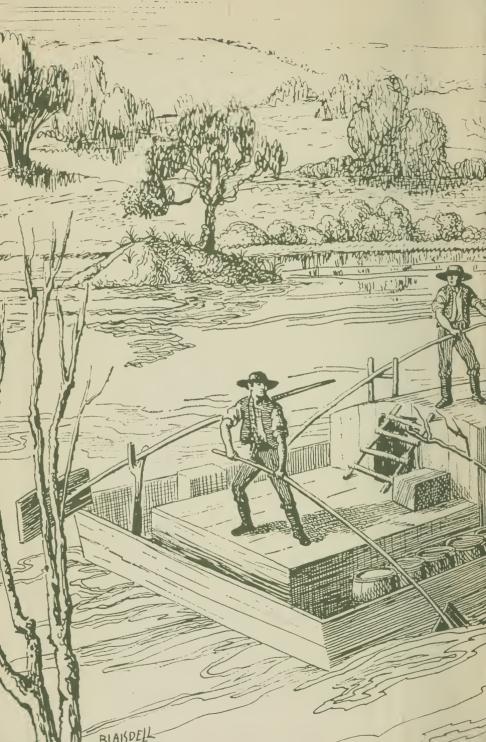
THE REAL BOOK ABOUT ABRAHAM LINCOLN shows vividly the Lincoln family's life as pioneers in Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. It shows young Abe growing up as a lively young athlete, always ready to pit his strength against another's, yet growing to be a student and a thinker, too.

Lincoln's adventurous river trips and his horrible, burning impressions of the slave market in New Orleans are here, as well as his success as a frontier lawyer and legislator.

Lincoln's later years in the White House were those of a man burdened with the problems of a nation, yet there were many moments of humor and relaxation.

This story is a spirited one—of Lincoln the human being, the typical American, and Lincoln the President who headed his country in its darkest days and with wisdom and compassion preserved our Union.







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THE REAL BOOK ABOUT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY MICHAEL GORHAM

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ELINORE BLAISDELL



EDITED BY HELEN HOKE

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THE REAL BOOK ABOUT ABRAHAM LINCOLN





Chapter 1: ABE IN THE WILDERNESS

Sunday Morning, February 12, 1809, Thomas Lincoln had news to spread. He pushed open the leather-hinged door of his one-room log cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky, and stepped outside.

Thomas was too "pore" to have a riding horse handy in a barn and ready to saddle, but he'd gladly walk anywhere today. His strong, stocky body usually moved slowly. Today he swung along quickly, two miles up the road to the place where Tom and Betsy Sparrow lived. They were the foster parents of his wife, Nancy, and it was at their cabin he told his news.

"Nancy's got a boy baby," he said to nine-year-old

Dennis Hanks who met him in the doorway. Dennis was a cousin of Nancy, and the Sparrows had adopted him, too. Full of excitement, Dennis ran off down the road to what he called the "Linkern place" in his backwoods "Kaintucky" drawl.

There he found two-year-old Sarah Lincoln playing on the dirt floor of the cabin. Near by, his dark, slender cousin, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, lay under bearskin covers on a bunk bed made of poles, and with her was a new baby.

"What are you going to call him?" Dennis asked.

"Abraham, after his grandfather," gray-eyed Nancy replied.

When he took a good look at the baby by the light of the one small window in the cabin, Dennis was disappointed.

"Its skin looks just like red cherry pulp squeezed

dry, in wrinkles," he said.

On further examination he decided little Abe would "never come to much." One thing was certain—it would be a long time before this small baby would be any good as a playmate. Even when Abe began to grow, Dennis was not hopeful. The family all said the new baby was "solemn as a papoose."

As it turned out, Dennis didn't have to feel disappointed for very long. In a few years Abe began to play and get into mischief—and mischief was some-

thing Dennis loved dearly.

When Abe was three, his family moved to a barren, almost treeless farm on Knob Creek a few miles away. He lived there for the next four years or so. And more and more as he grew from a baby to a boy, he loved his hard-working mother whom he called "Mammy."

She sent him off when he was seven on a four-mile walk to the "blab" school. It was called that because the children "blabbed" their lessons. Big boys who were almost men and little fellows like Abe all recited out loud together, repeating the teacher's words in a singsong. The idea seemed to be that sooner or later everybody would remember some of the lessons at least.

Abe didn't get to the classes very often. Later he said he attended school "by littles." Although he went to several different schools before he was grown, the time he actually spent in classrooms added up to less than a year altogether. Some people think it was only about four months. But when he was there, Abe acted just like the other boys. He got into mischief, and the teacher in his first school switched him with a hazel switch.

On the days when Abe's mother trudged to the store at Elizabethtown to buy the few things she could afford, she took him along. Abe liked these trips. For one thing, he could watch the clerk as he waited on Mrs. Lincoln, and that was something for Abe's wise gray eyes to wonder at. The clerk was the only man

Abe had ever seen who wore store clothes every single day. All the other men wore buckskins or maybe homespun shirts and pants, except sometimes on Sunday. But there was something even better about the store. The clerk gave Abe maple sugar to eat while Mrs. Lincoln was busy. Abe used to perch on a maple syrup keg or a keg of nails and suck on the precious gift.

On the way to school and back, or around the farm when there were no chores to do, Abe had a good deal of fun. Sometimes he played with his older sister Sarah, sometimes with a friend. Once he and little Johnny Duncan chased a ground hog. The boys were quick in their motions, but the chubby ground hog was quicker. He slipped away from them into a crevice between two rocks. For two hours Abe and Johnny kept trying to get the animal out of his hiding place, but they had no luck.

Here was a problem Abe wanted to solve, and he was determined he would solve it. Finally he thought of a plan and dashed off a quarter of a mile to a black-smith shop. There he borrowed an iron hook. When he got back to Johnny who was standing guard over the ground hog, Abe fastened the hook to the end of a pole. Then just as he had figured, they were able to hook the animal out of the crevice.

Even before he was seven, Abe was always planning out things that way, but not all his plans worked

so well. He found that other boys could be smart, too.

Once he and Austin Gollaher were out in the woods when the papaws were soft and ripe and good for eating. Both boys had taken off their coonskin caps and dropped them on the ground. Then Abe climbed a tree right over the place where the caps lay. As he climbed, an idea came into his head. It would be a good joke if he dropped a soft, juicy, messy papaw into Austin's coonskin cap. But Austin guessed what was coming, and he quietly switched caps while Abe was not looking. The papaw sailed down. Abe's aim was perfect—but the joke was on him.

One Sunday Austin and his mother came over to the Lincoln cabin for the day, and Abe and Austin played and explored. While they were wandering along Knob Creek, Abe stopped at one spot and pointed.

"Right up there," he said, "we saw a covey of partridges yesterday. Let's go over and get some of them."

The creek was swollen and too wide for them to jump over, but Abe saw a narrow log lying across the water.

"Let's coon it," he proposed. Austin agreed, and he went across first, crawling on all fours like a raccoon. Then Abe started. He crept out halfway, but suddenly he got scared and began trembling.

"Don't look down nor up nor sideways! Look

right at me and hold on tight!" Austin shouted. But his advice was too late.

Abe fell in. The water was deep—seven or eight feet deep, and neither Abe nor Austin could swim.

Austin thought quickly. He snatched a long stick and pushed one end into the stream. Abe grabbed it when he came up. He hung on for dear life, and Austin pulled him to shore. There he held Abe by the arms and shook him, then rolled him on the ground to get the water out of him. Austin had saved Abe's life.

Another time the two boys went bathing on purpose. They shed their shirts, which were all the clothes they usually wore except on special occasions, and lay around in the sun—lay around for a long time. Even though his skin was dark, Abe got badly sunburned, and a few days later all the skin on his back peeled off.

The fact that Abe often wore only a shirt caused trouble. It was a sign he was poor. Boys who were rich enough to own jeans or buckskins to cover their shanks called him "a shirttail boy." Those were fighting words. One day while he was on his way to the mill with corn to be ground, Abe fought three boys all at once because they called him a shirttail boy. Even before he was seven Abe wasn't afraid of a fight.

And he wasn't afraid of work, although he didn't exactly like it. There was plenty of work to do, too. He carried big buckets of water; he filled the wood

box; he cleaned the fireplace where his mother did all the cooking. He hoed weeds on the farm. But the farm didn't grow enough food to keep the family. So he and Sarah had to go into the woods and gather berries and grapes and nuts. When his father plowed, Abe sat astride the horse and guided it around the fields.

The plow was made of wood with only a little iron on the share—the part that dug into the earth. It didn't do a very good job of turning the soil, and the soil was poor anyway. So the crops weren't large. To help feed his family, Thomas Lincoln sometimes worked as a carpenter, but still it was hard to make out on the farm at Knob Hill.

One spring day little Abe went out with his father to a seven-acre field that was ready for planting. First his father and some older neighbor boys put in the corn. It was Abe's job to plant pumpkin seeds along with the corn in every other row. At last it was done. Two days later a big rain came. It washed out all the corn and all of Abe's pumpkin seeds, too.

Abe's father decided to move. He had heard there was good land farther west—a hundred miles by river or trail, over in Indiana. Thomas Lincoln sold his farm for ten barrels of whiskey, which many people on the frontier used instead of money. They had to trade in whiskey or hides or other things because there was very little money around.

Then Thomas Lincoln built a flatboat. People said it was a "crazy craft" and would never get to Indiana. But Abe's father put the whiskey and his carpenter tools and his few pieces of furniture aboard, and one day he started out in it alone to look for a new home.

After a while he came back and told the family he had found the place he wanted on Little Pigeon Creek in Indiana. He'd had only one accident with the flat-boat. It had tipped over and spilled everything into the river. But somehow he managed to get most of the stuff out of the water, even the whiskey barrels, and it was all over on the other side of the Ohio River now, waiting for them. They would pick it up and take it in a wagon to their new home.

Abe's mother and sister climbed on one horse. Abe and his father mounted another, and they started out to ride the hundred miles to Indiana. Thomas Lincoln knew it was a hundred miles because he had walked all the way back from Little Pigeon Creek.

The country they rode through was real wilderness, and sometimes it was so hard for the horses to move along that Abe's father and mother had to get off and walk. Abe was now one of the thousands and thousands of Americans who called themselves "movers"—people who kept moving West, pushing the frontier farther and farther into the great central part of America.

Abe's people had been movers from a long way

back, and as he jounced along astride the horse, deeper and deeper into the wilderness, he may have thought about his grandfather, the one after whom he had been named. Grandfather Abraham had been a pioneer in Kentucky right after the American Revolution. He had been a friend of Daniel Boone and had moved over the mountains from Virginia into the new western lands Boone had explored.

Young Abe had often heard the story about his grandfather, and this was the way it went:

One day in 1784 Grandfather Abraham went out to the field near his new log cabin in Kentucky. As he worked that morning, he had his three sons with him. Mordecai was fourteen and old enough to help dig the stubborn roots out of the newly broken earth. Josiah was younger but big enough to help some and to take some responsibilities, too. Then there was Thomas who was only knee-high and just tagged along for company. As Tom played, he imitated the motions his father and his older brothers made while they worked getting the soil ready to grow food for the family to eat.

Then suddenly, without a moment's warning, Grandfather Abraham crumpled up and the three boys heard a rifle shot break the quiet of the morning. A bullet fired from ambush had killed him.

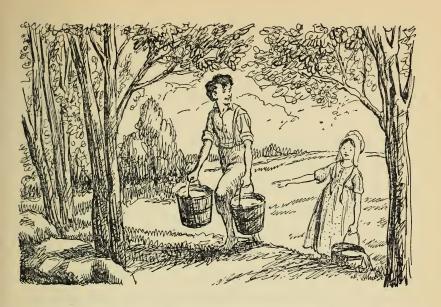
Mordecai knew that Indians often killed whites to frighten others away from Indian lands. Quickly he sent Josiah running to the nearby fort. There would be men at the fort who could come and help fight off an Indian attack. Then Mordecai ran for the cabin where there was a gun. That left bewildered little Tom in the field near his father's body. Mordecai pointed his long muzzle-loading rifle through a peephole in the cabin wall, ready to protect his brother and get any Indian who dared show himself.

He could see Tom sitting beside his father, puzzled and frightened by what had happened, and in an instant he saw an Indian standing over little Tom. A silver, crescent-shaped ornament hung on his bare, brown chest. Mordecai took careful aim at the decoration. Then, before the Indian could harm his brother, he fired, and the Indian dropped to the ground.

Soon there was more shooting, as Josiah brought men from the fort, and another Indian was wounded before the rescue party chased the raiders away.

Little Thomas was saved, and here he was now, a grown man, pushing farther into the wilderness, his own children going with him.

Seven-year-old Abe wondered if they would meet any Indians, and he was glad they didn't. The woods were quiet all around. Abe felt chilly sometimes as he rode. Winter was coming, winter in the forestcovered wilderness of Indiana, over on the other side of the broad Ohio River.



Chapter II: LITTLE PIGEON CREEK

THE LINCOLNS crossed the river in an open, flatbottomed ferry boat. As soon as they reached shore, Abe could see that Indiana was going to be different from the barren farm he had left on Knob Creek in Kentucky. He had a feeling there were more trees and fewer people than he'd been used to—and he hadn't been used to many people at that.

Thomas Lincoln rented a wagon at a farm near the riverbank. Then he went to pick up his tools and furniture and the barrels of whiskey from the farmer who had stored them for him. Abe helped load handwrought pots and pans, big bear robes, axes, and knives into the wagon. Then he watched with deep

excitement as his father turned the horses away from the river and into the woods. Abe had never traveled, that he could remember, in a wagon with all his family and all they owned. And he was going to a new place.

A narrow wagon track was all they had to follow for the sixteen miles to Little Pigeon Creek, and it was overgrown with brush in some places. Once in a while Abe's father had to go out ahead of the wagon with his axe and clear the way. But finally they came to a certain place his father recognized in the woods near Little Pigeon Creek. Here was to be their home. To Abe it must have seemed like a thousand other places in the forest where no man had ever farmed before.

The wagon went back to its owner, and Abe was alone with his sister, his slow-moving father, and his kindly mother. There would be few playmates here, at least until more movers came in and tried to start farms. Winter was coming on, and the Lincolns did not even have a place to sleep.

Abe, who was not yet eight, set to work with his family to make some kind of shelter. They built a three-sided shack of small logs or poles. It was like many other shacks on the frontier which people called pole sheds or open-faced camps. Abe's pole shed was open to the weather on one side all year round.

When the three walls had been put up, a roof of

poles was laid over the top. Then Abe and the others got a lot of mud and chinked it into the spaces between the poles. Finally they piled brush and dried grass over the roof so that rain wouldn't beat down hard enough on the mud to wash it out.

This was the house Abe was going to live in, and that's all there was to it. The open side faced south to get the warmth of the sun whenever the sun was showing. The only other heat came from logs which burned all day and all night in front of the open side of the shed. Abe's mother did her cooking over the burning logs.

There were no beds, just piles of dry leaves in the two back corners. That was Abe's home for a year, in the middle of the forest, far from any neighbors. It was a mile even from the nearest spring. Abe and Sarah had to go there often with a bucket to bring water for cooking and drinking and washing. When the weather was good they went barefoot, but in winter they had homemade moccasins.

The pole shed wasn't meant to be a real house, but the Lincolns had to have something to stay in while Abe's father was getting a real log cabin built and while he was hunting. It was lucky he liked to hunt because the family needed the bear meat and venison and wild turkey and wild hog meat he brought out of the woods. It wasn't hard to shoot deer at first. Lots of them came to a place called a salt lick about a mile from the camp. The ground was salty there, and the deer licked it up.

Just as the Indians did, the Lincolns saved the skins of the deer to make their buckskin clothes and moccasins.

Although Abe didn't help his father much with the hunting, he did help build the new log cabin. Not long after he was eight, he chopped down trees and notched the logs, working along with his father. Thomas Lincoln was a carpenter so he could show Abe how to work with wood.

The new cabin wasn't much bigger than the open-faced camp. It had only one room, eighteen feet on a side. But it was more solidly built, with four walls to keep out wind and snow. For some reason Thomas Lincoln didn't get around to building a door. The entrance was just a low hole in one wall. The cabin was always dark because it had no windows. Mrs. Lincoln used burning pine knots instead of candles or lamps, and these, together with the fire in the fireplace, gave off enough light to cook and eat by. The fireplace chimney was made of mud and sticks.

For beds the Lincolns had rough bunks made of poles fastened to the cabin walls. Abe's was in a kind of loft right under the roof. He climbed up to bed on a ladder of pegs in the wall, and he slept on a mattress of dry leaves.

Some days when he and Sarah weren't carrying

water or helping their tired mother around the campfire and listening to her sing her Kentucky songs, they went off to school. It's not surprising that they didn't go very often during their first year in Indiana because the schoolhouse was nine miles away. They had to walk eighteen miles every one of the few days they did attend.

Nearly a year passed on Little Pigeon Creek—a lonesome year—but one day in the fall, after the first crops were in, Abe caught a sound he had waited a long time to hear. Off in the woods, in the direction of the wagon trail his family had followed, he heard the creak and rumble of a wagon. Maybe this was the wagon he had been waiting for. Tom and Betsy Sparrow and Dennis Hanks were coming out to Indiana to join the Lincolns.

Abe ran barefoot through the woods toward the wheel sounds. Sure enough, his old friends from Kentucky had come. At the clearing where the new cabin and the open-faced camp stood, the Sparrows and Dennis unloaded the wagon. They moved into the pole shed which Abe and his family had just moved out of.

Dennis was always full of good spirits and practical jokes. It was fun to have him around, even if he was seventeen and Abe only eight. Dennis gave a hand with the work, too, and that helped a lot.

But before a year was up, Dennis had to help Abe's

father with the saddest thing either of them ever had to do or Abe had to watch. They dug graves on a little hill in the woods not far from the cabin for Dennis's foster parents, Tom and Betsy Sparrow, and then for Abe's beloved mother. All three had died of a strange sickness of those times called "the milk-sick."

Just after his mother died, Abe sat for a long time and whittled and wondered and felt lost. He whittled little pine pegs that his father used instead of nails in the coffin he was making for Nancy. Abe watched Dennis and his father pulling the whipsaw back and forth as they cut boards from the logs that had been left over from the cabin. And then he saw his father plane down the boards and bore holes and pound Abe's pine pegs into them. Thomas Lincoln had never managed to make a very good home for Nancy, but he seemed to be trying to make her the best coffin he could. Abe wasn't quite sure how he felt about his father. He got along with him by obeying and doing the work he was told to do, and by keeping out of the way when he wanted to do things his own way. And now his mother, who loved him and whom he loved, was gone.

A new mother came, though, in a few months a mother who loved nine-year-old Abe as much as any real mother could.



Chapter III: ABE GETS A NEW MOTHER

It had been hard for everybody in the cabin during the time after Nancy and Tom and Betsy Sparrow died. It was hardest of all when Abe's father went away for a while the next winter, leaving only scatter-brained young Dennis to take care of him and his sister. Besides getting the water from the spring a mile away and keeping the fire in the fireplace going, they had to do all their own cooking. It was cold and lonesome, and Abe knew there were wolves and bears out there in the woods.

At last one day in February a wagon pulled up at the cabin. Abe and Sarah and fun-loving Dennis were happy and excited—then surprised. Out of the wagon climbed Abe's father and his tall, proud-looking new wife whose name was Sarah. Then came *her* three children—little Matilda and John and Sarah. That made three Sarahs in the cabin—the new little girl, Abe's own sister, and his new "Mammy."

Abe's new Mammy was someone Thomas Lincoln had known in Kentucky. He knew that her husband had died, and he went back on purpose to find out if she would come and be a mother to his two children. Although she had lived in a comfortable house in a town, she liked the idea of moving out to the frontier with the Lincoln family. And so she married Thomas, and here she was. She was strong and comforting and large and calm and friendly, and she made things hum wherever she went.

Abe was glad to have all of his new family, particularly his new Mammy. She was glad to discover Abe, too. "He never gave me a cross word, and I never gave him a cross word," she said later. "His mind and mine seemed to run together."

Abe liked the presents she had brought along with her from Kentucky. That very first night he slept with the other children on a feather mattress and feather pillow, instead of the pile of dried corn husks which had taken the place of the dry leaves he had slept on at first. His new Mammy tossed the corn husks out right away, but she didn't waste them. She said they would come in handy for the pigs when they got some later on. The next day she gave Abe and his own sister Sarah and Dennis all some new clothes.

There was bustle in the cabin for a long time after Abe's new mother arrived. She got his father to lay a wooden floor. She didn't like the old dirt floor. She got him to cut two windows so light could come in, and he hung a door to keep the weather cut. She arranged the furniture, putting the clothes chest she had brought by the fireplace.

Gradually things settled down in the little log cabin, although its one room sometimes seemed about to burst with five children, Dennis, and Abe's father, and his new mother living there. New pots and pans, knives and forks, a black walnut dresser, a clothes chest, a real table, and better chairs, all made life in the crowded cabin easier and more pleasant in some ways than it had ever been.

The year Abe was ten his new mother sent him off to school whenever it was possible. His father said this was silly. But Sarah Lincoln thought a lot of education and of Abe—and she won out.

Even so, Abe couldn't write yet, and he wasn't too sure of his reading. Maybe if he had learned to read earlier he would have been at home looking at a book one night instead of going out with his new foster-brother Johnny and some other boys. And, if he hadn't been out, he wouldn't have got into trouble and done something he was very sorry about.

Abe and Johnny and the others sometimes sneaked away at night to go coon hunting. They weren't supposed to. Abe's father said they couldn't, but they went anyway, and one night they took with them a little yellow watchdog named Joe who belonged to Abe's father.

The boys finally caught a coon and skinned it. Then somebody had an idea that it would be funny to fasten the skin onto the little dog and make him look like a coon. Joe didn't like the whole business. He yapped and struggled as the boys fixed the fresh skin on him so it wouldn't come off. When they let him loose, he made a beeline for home.

Some larger dogs who were out that night smelled the coon smell on Joe and saw the coon look of him. They went after him, and that was the end of the little yellow dog.

Nobody is sure just how old Abe was when this coon hunt happened, but one thing is certain. When Abe was eleven, he suddenly began to grow. People said he grew faster than any boy they had ever seen. As he grew he worked. His tall body took on strength while he cut wood day after day. He cleared away trees to make room for new fields, and he learned all the tricks of swinging an axe. People nicknamed him "Longshanks" and said he was awkward the way he walked, but no one remembers any such talk about his handling of an axe. In fact, it wasn't long before

one man said, "Abe can sink an axe deeper into wood than any man I ever saw."

Often he would do his chopping far from any cabin. He would take his lunch—a corn dodger or cake of coarse cornmeal—and go out to work alone all day. From sunrise to sunset was a regular day's work. Abe cut down walnut, beech, oak, elm, and maple trees, and he cleared out dogwood and wild grape vines.

"If you heard him fellin' trees in a clearin'," a friend said, "you would say there was three men at work by the way the trees fell."

As Abe swung his axe rhythmically, he swayed his body to get the most out of his swing. Month by month and year by year he gained strength from the chopping and from trimming logs and splitting firewood. He used a huge kind of mallet or maul to drive wedges into logs and split them lengthwise. This gave him more strength. And it gave neighbors puncheons. These were half logs which made good floor boards or table tops with the flat side up.

Abe did farm work, too. He helped his father who raised mostly corn. But, as Dennis said, there was some wheat, too—"enough for a cake Sunday morning." And there were a few sheep and cattle to care for. Abe wrestled with a plow when it was time to get the fields ready for planting. In the fall he cut and stacked big bundles of corn stalks for fodder.

As Abe grew stronger, he grew taller still. His body seemed to be reaching up toward the tops of the trees he was cutting. By the time he was seventeen, he had reached his full height—six feet four inches.

Abe's father said, "He was the ganglin'est, awk-wardest feller that ever stepped over a ten-rail snake fence. He had to duck to get through a door. He appeared to be all j'ints." But with his wiry strength, Abe knew just how to use all that height to get the most out of it. He knew just how to hold himself so as to do the most work with the least strain.

One day he showed grown men what he could do. Four of them were standing by a new corn crib. They had poles they were going to put under the crib so they could lift it and carry it to the place where it was supposed to be set up. They figured it would be quite a job, even for four of them. Then Abe, who was watching, stepped over to the crib. He knew just how to tilt it so he could get his shoulders under it. He heaved it up and walked over to the spot the farmer had chosen for the crib, with the whole building on his shoulders.

He could lift other heavy loads the same way, although he weighed only a hundred and sixty pounds. Once he carried a chicken coop which people guessed weighed about six hundred pounds. Another time he carried off two logs at once. Three grown men had

been standing there wondering if the three of them could carry one log at a time.

While he had been working alone in the woods, wrestling with big logs, Abe had had plenty of time to figure out how to use all the length and weight of him as a lever. He had plenty of time to think about a lot of things, and he always liked to think and figure and plan.

Something happened out in the woods once which led him to tell his little stepsister Matilda what he had

figured out about honesty.

Matilda, or Tilda as Abe called her, often wanted to tag along with him when he went off on his all-day working trips. But her mother wanted the mischievous Tilda around the cabin where she could keep an eye on her. She told the little girl to stay home. One day, however, Tilda slipped away after Abe when her mother wasn't looking.

Abe followed a deer trail toward the clearing where he was to work, and as he walked he made such a racket with his tuneless singing that he couldn't hear Tilda on the path behind him. She sneaked up, and then to give Abe a good surprise, she ran and jumped on his back with a hand on each shoulder and a knee in between. She had often seen boys topple each other over this way, just for fun. And big though Abe was, her jump so surprised him that he fell.

Tilda, of course, fell with him, and she got a nasty

cut in her leg from the axe Abe had in his hand. He tore strips of cloth off his shirt and Tilda's dress and made a bandage to stop the bleeding.

The cut hurt a good deal, and Abe comforted Tilda as she cried. He knew that she was not supposed to follow him off to work and, when she had stopped crying, he said, "Tilda, what are you going to tell your mother about getting hurt?"

The question set Tilda to crying again, and between sobs she answered, "Tell her I did it with an axe. That will be the truth, won't it?"

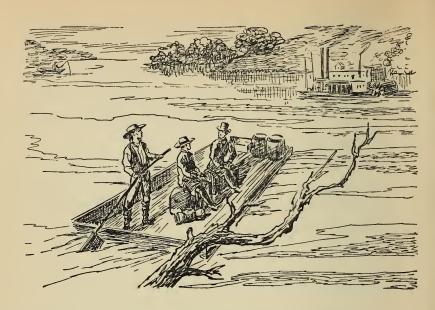
"Yes, that's the truth," Abe admitted, "but it's not the whole truth." Then he advised her, "Tell her the whole truth, Tilda, and trust your good mother for the rest."

Tilda wasn't the only one who played practical jokes. Once, when he had already grown tall and strong, Abe played one on his mother that set her to laughing for an hour before she made him clean up the mess he had made.

When she moved into the Lincoln cabin, she had done a lot of things to make the place cheerier. For one thing she had whitewashed the low ceiling. Sarah was proud of that ceiling, and she joked with Abe, telling him to keep his head clean so as not to get the ceiling dirty. She didn't care so much about the dirt he brought in on his feet—the floor was easier to clean. Maybe that was what gave Abe his idea.

Anyway, one day he got the barefoot boys around to wade in the mud. Then he held them upside down, and the boys walked across the ceiling leaving good big muddy tracks. They made you think the world had gone crazy and the cabin had flopped upside down, turning the ceiling into the floor.

After she had her laugh, Abe's mother pretended to get serious and told the young giant that he ought to be spanked. She also told him, of course, to clean the ceiling, and he did.



Chapter IV: LONGSHANKS FINDS JOBS

ABE AND THE OTHER BOYS his age often had wrestling matches and races and jumping contests when they got together. Abe was the best wrestler anywhere around. He could take the big maul he used in splitting logs and throw it farther than anyone else could. He could pitch a crowbar farther, too, and run faster. His long legs made him the best broad jumper.

He had a chance to meet others and match skills with them whenever he took corn or wheat to the mill to grind. The mill was seven miles away, and the men and boys from all the farms around gathered there. Someone was almost always waiting for his turn, and there was plenty of wrestling and joking

and talking. Abe liked all that, and he liked to watch the working of the simple machinery of the mill, too.

When his turn came he put his corn between the heavy millstones, then hitched his horse out at one end of the "arm" or pole fastened to the upper millstone. The horse walked around and around in circles, turning the upper stone and grinding the corn under it into meal.

Once Abe took a bag of corn and made the ride to the mill on an old, flea-bitten gray mare. A lot of others were ahead of him, so his turn didn't come until it was almost dark. Abe had to hurry now if he was to get his grinding done. He hitched the old mare to the end of the arm and perched himself on the pole to give it more weight. (This also saved him the trouble of walking round and round.) Then he tried to get some speed out of the horse. He snapped his whip and kept yelling, "Git up, you old hussy!"

The mare didn't like the whip or the yelling either, and before long she let fly with her hoofs, just as Abe was in the middle of a shout, "Git up . . ." A hoof struck Abe in the forehead and knocked him unconscious.

The miller sent for Abe's father, seven miles away. Thomas Lincoln came in a wagon and took him home. Abe stayed unconscious all the way back to the cabin and all night long after they put him into bed. Then

toward morning he came to. And he finished the sentence the mare had interrupted with her kick—". . . you old hussy!"

Abe was persistent that way. When he made up his mind to do something, he generally finished it, although it sometimes took a long while.

Before long he recovered from the kick in the head and was back at work. Because of his strength, he often got jobs with farmers when they were butchering. He could lift a two-hundred-pound hog by its hind legs and hang it up ready to be dressed. He could swing his maul at just the right spot on a steer's head and kill it at one blow.

Abe learned all about butchering and skinning and tanning hides, too. These were good things to know on the frontier. Meat was necessary. But Abe never liked to hunt for it. He had never fired at a wild animal since the time he was nine, when he shot a wild turkey through a chink in the cabin wall. Long as he lived after that Abe never hunted. Maybe it was because his father loved hunting, and Abe wanted to be different. Or maybe it was for some other reason. Abe didn't like fishing, either.

But he did like rivers and boats. When he was sixteen he worked for a while on a farm on the bank of the Ohio River. In between farm chores he ferried people over the water in a flatboat. He stood in the stern of his boat and made it go by wiggling a large

oar, called a scull, out behind like a fishtail. Handling a scull was not as easy as it sounds. Abe sometimes said he thought it was the hardest work he ever did.

In those days before railroad trains, people traveled by steamboat on the Ohio River. Once two men wanted to catch a steamboat which was waiting for them out in the river. "I was about eighteen years of age," Abe said later, "and belonged, as you know, to what they call down South the 'scrubs.' I was very glad of the chance of earning something and supposed each of the men would give me a couple of bits [twenty-five cents]. I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board, and I lifted the trunks and put them on deck. The steamer was about to steam again when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay me.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half-dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat."

Abe went on to say, "It was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

Abe had earned more in one day than he had ever earned in three days before. And even when one of the half dollars slipped out of his hand into the water, he still had more money than he had ever earned before in a day.

Abe decided to do more ferrying. He hired out to

a man who owned a good landing on the river. He was to earn only thirty-seven cents a day—a boy's pay instead of a man's. And he had to build his own flatboat besides.

Abe did all the work on the boat himself, beginning with cutting down the trees. Next he sawed the logs into planks and smoothed them down with a drawknife. He planned out the size and shape of his boat and put the planks together with the same kind of pegs he had whittled when his mother died. There was not a nail in the boat—nails were scarce on the frontier.

The boat worked well. Now Abe could be a regular ferryman, and he made frequent trips with passengers and baggage out to steamboats in the river. It was good to have a job, for his family had never seen much cash money from one year's end to the next. But Abe soon found there were troubles where money was concerned—troubles of a kind he'd never known.

One day he saw that someone on the Kentucky side of the river wanted him to cross over. He thought it was a passenger. But when he got there, two brothers who were ferrymen on the Kentucky side jumped on him and started to throw him into the river. They didn't know what Abe could do as a wrestler. In the end they decided to take him to the local justice of the peace instead of trying to heave him into the Ohio. Of course, they couldn't have made Abe go if he

hadn't been willing. But there was something happening here that he didn't understand, and he wanted to find out about it.

The brothers told the justice of the peace they wanted Abe arrested. Then he was tried for breaking a Kentucky law which said that only boats from Kentucky could bring paying passengers to the Kentucky shore. Abe explained that he only carried passengers out to the middle of the river to steamboats. He didn't carry them all the way across, and the brothers didn't claim that he did when they got right down to talking to the judge. Maybe they were just trying to frighten Abe away from ferrying so they could have all the business on both sides of the river.

Anyway, the justice of the peace told Abe he wasn't guilty of breaking the law, and he had a good talk with him after court was over.

This day's happenings set Abe to thinking about laws and courts. There was a lot about them that seemed worth knowing. Many times after that he sculled across the river to watch cases going on before that same justice of the peace. And one day he walked thirty-four miles just to hear a lawyer in another court make a speech.



Chapter V: "A LEARNER ALWAYS"

THERE HAD NEVER BEEN a book, except maybe a Bible or a newspaper, in the Lincoln cabin in Kentucky. The same was true in Indiana for a good while, even after Abe's new mother came. He had never had a story read to him until one day when a wagon broke down near the cabin. While the man who owned the wagon was repairing it, his wife and two daughters stayed at the cabin. "The woman had books and read us stories," Abe said later. "They were the first I ever heard." And Abe was interested.

All the time he was growing and getting strong and working at different jobs, he was learning. But not much of that learning was done in school. For one

thing, school cost money. Besides, there were no regular classes in all of southern Indiana. From time to time a wandering teacher came along and gave lessons for a few weeks in one vacant cabin or another, but that was all.

A little schooling when he was eleven, and again when he was about thirteen, and again when he was seventeen helped Abe with his reading and writing. And so did his stepmother. She saw something was going on in his head. He really wanted to learn. After he finally got the hang of it, she made a rule that whenever he was reading around the cabin no one could disturb him. But Abe's father saw things differently. He thought "eddication" wasn't important.

Much of the time Abe could only learn by asking questions, and he asked a lot. He was inquisitive. Whenever a stranger passed by the Lincoln cabin, Abe would be sure to ask the first question. His father didn't like that. Once Abe was perched on the fence when he started questioning a passer-by. His father knocked him clear off the fence and onto the ground. Whenever something like this happened Abe was silent. He didn't howl or cry. Only a few silent tears betrayed the anger and humiliation he felt inside. And he didn't stop learning.

When there was a chance to go to school he was always there early. His friends noticed that he was often quiet outside the one-room log cabin school at play-

time. He seemed to like being alone and thinking, but whenever there was trouble between other boys he was likely to be the one who settled it.

Inside the school a dim light came through the greased-paper windows. There was almost no glass in frontier country. The pupils could see that Abe was working harder and learning more than the rest of them. They agreed that he was the best student in his class.

The lessons Abe had were mainly in reading, writing, and "ciphering," that is, arithmetic. But there was one school he attended awhile when he was thirteen or fourteen that gave a special course in manners. Abe would have to leave the log cabin classroom and come in as a gentleman was supposed to enter a fashionable drawing room. Then he would be taken around the room and introduced with great politeness to all his playmates. Abe was probably laughing inside fit to kill while all these shenanigans were going on. And he probably was not at the head of the class in the study of manners. The rules about manners were one thing he never learned, nor tried very hard to learn, as long as he lived. He got on with people just by being fair and funny and human.

This is how Abe looked when he had his lessons in entering a room like a gentleman: A classmate said that "his skin was shriveled and yellow." He was often barefoot, but he might have had on moccasins or

rough handmade shoes. He wore buckskin breeches and a homemade shirt of linsey-woolsey, that is, part linen and part wool. Outdoors he wore a coonskin or squirrel skin cap. His buckskin breeches were baggy and short, showing his shin bones, which a classmate said were "sharp, blue, and narrow."

Abe might not have been dressed like a gentleman, and he probably didn't act exactly like one, but he was good at spelling, and he liked Kate Roby, a pretty girl in the class who was a little older than he was. One day the schoolmaster tested the class in spelling. The students stood in two lines facing each other on opposite sides of the room. The word the teacher gave them was "defied." Several students missed, and then it came Kate's turn.

"Abe stood on the other side of the room and was watching me," Kate said later. "I got as far as d-e-f-, and then I stopped, hesitating whether to proceed with an i or a y." Kate looked up and saw Abe with a grin on his face, pointing to his eye. Kate knew what he meant and spelled the word correctly.

Abe liked Kate very much. He even used to go on walks with her. But he was more interested in learning, in figuring things out, than he was in girls. One evening the two of them sat on the riverbank, dangling their bare feet in the water and watching the moon go down. This set Abe to talking. He explained that the moon didn't really sink at all. He said the

movement of the earth made it seem as if the moon sank.

Kate thought this was a downright silly notion. Anybody could see that the moon went down. She argued with Abe, but he stuck to his point and gave quite a lecture on astronomy. Kate still was not convinced and didn't admit she was wrong until a long time later. But she did wonder how Abe had learned so much and how he could explain things so clearly. Abe certainly hadn't learned about the moon and stars in school.

He learned about them and about lots of other things by reading. People said he read everything there was to read for fifty miles around the Lincoln cabin. "The things I want to know are in books," Abe used to explain. "My best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read."

By the time he was fourteen he read every minute he could. One of his companions said, "When Abe and I returned to the house from work, he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of cornbread, sit down, take a book, cock his legs up as high as his head, and read. We grubbed, plowed, mowed, and worked together barefoot in the field. Whenever Abe had a chance while at work in the field, he would stop and read."

Not all the farmers liked this habit of Abe's. One of the neighbors for whom Abe worked said, "He was always reading and thinking. I used to get mad at him. I say he was awful lazy. He would laugh and talk, crack his jokes and tell stories all the time; didn't love work half as much as his pay. He said to me one day his father taught him to work, but he never taught him to love it."

But Abe's mind wasn't lazy. It was always working, even when his body wasn't. And sometimes he had to do hard physical work in order to pay for the work his mind did.

One time he borrowed Parson Weems's Life of Washington from a stingy farmer whom he called Blue Nose because of the way his nose looked. When Abe wasn't reading this book he put it on a shelf in the cabin. As luck would have it, there was a crack between two logs behind the shelf, and one night rain came through the crack and damaged the covers of the book.

Old Blue Nose said the damage was worth seventy-five cents, and he made Abe work three whole days at twenty-five cents a day pulling cornstalks for fodder in order to pay for the damage.

Abe liked the book about Washington, and he liked another book by the same author about another Revolutionary hero, Francis Marion, who was called the Swamp Fox. These books set him thinking about how Americans got their freedom, and what that freedom was. He understood the Swamp Fox—a

smart young man on the frontier who knew all about rivers and swamps and how to hide in them. The Swamp Fox knew how to fool the well-equipped British soldiers and how to lick them in the end.

Abe understood Robinson Crusoe, too. Here was another smart man who used his wits in a place that was like the frontier, and who managed to get along all right where you wouldn't think anybody could get along at all. He liked *Aesop's Fables*, too. Abe had grown up among animals. Here was a book with animal characters in it, some of them like the ones he knew. Every story had a point, and that was the way Abe liked stories.

When Abe read these books, or a history of the United States, or the Bible, he used to lie under the shade of a tree if he could. At night he stretched out flat on his stomach in front of the fireplace and read by the firelight. When he read silently his lower lip stuck out, a habit he kept all his life. But often as not he read aloud, the way he had learned to read in the schools he had gone to. This way, he said, he could read a book twice and all at the same time. One reading was with his eyes and the other was with his ears.

Abe also studied arithmetic. He seldom had paper and never had a blackboard. Instead he wrote his figures with charcoal on a broad wooden shovel. When the shovel was covered with figures, he planed it down and began again. He also practiced his arithmetic on the flat sides of the logs in the cabin walls and on boards. Using chalk, he filled up every flat space he could find, then rubbed out the chalk marks and began again.

Abe began to write down what he learned and the ideas he had. When he could get paper he wrote on it with a pen he made out of a quill from a turkey buzzard. He made ink out of the juice of a brier root. One day he showed a friend an article he had written against cruelty to animals. As long as he lived he hated to see an animal hurt. Another day he read the class a theme about liquor-drinking. Abe thought then, and thought all his life, that people were better off if they did not drink whiskey. He had seen people on the frontier who had had too much to drink. He knew how it hurt them and hurt their families.

There were speeches, too, at school, and debates. On the days when there were "exercises" or special performances, students argued all kinds of things—whether the bees or the ants were better, whether wind or water was stronger, whether Negroes or Indians had the most right to complain. Abe liked these debates and speeches.

He also liked the debates and speeches he heard at Jones's store in the town of Gentryville, which had grown up since the Lincolns moved to Indiana. He went to the store as often as he could because Mr. Jones subscribed to a Louisville newspaper—it was the

only paper anywhere around—and because there were always men and boys there, talking politics, discussing sermons, or cracking jokes. Abe did his share of the talking, perhaps more than his share, but no one minded that. Abe entertained the whole town.

He had a wonderful memory and could repeat all the poems and speeches in the school readers. He recited them to the audience at the store. He got a real pleasure out of having an audience. He also repeated the sermons he heard wandering preachers give and imitated each preacher exactly as he spoke. He was a good actor. Sometimes he would step up on a tree stump by the store and repeat a speech he had heard a lawyer make in court. He made speeches of his own that way, too. One of his friends said that his speeches were always "calm, logical, and clear," and the same friend said that Abe's jokes and stories were so original and funny that he sometimes would keep most of the people in the little town up until midnight listening to him.

Abe was busy with serious things as well as funny stories. One time when he was not going to school he wrote an article on preserving the Constitution. He was already interested in that. He showed it to a lawyer friend from whom he had borrowed lots of books, and the lawyer said, "The world couldn't beat it." The lawyer liked the article so much he wanted to take Abe into his office to study law. Abe would have

liked that, but he said his family was so poor they couldn't spare him.

Abe had studied the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence which said, "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and he had read a law called "The Ordinance of 1787" which declared that slavery was illegal in the area where Indiana and Illinois became states.

Abe practiced speech-making in just the way he studied and practiced anything else he wanted to learn. Sometimes out in the woods when he was working alone he would stop work and climb up on a stump and orate to the trees. He made speeches to other boys when they were all supposed to be working on a farm.

And Abe wrote poems—serious poems and funny ones. But he soon found he wasn't as good at that as at speech-making. Sometimes he used these funny poems or the stories he made up to get even with people he thought had been mean to him or to someone he loved.

In those days Abe was sensitive, and he resented insults. He answered them by using his wits and the learning he already had about words and how to use them. But once he found that words were not enough, and he ended up in a battle royal.

For some reason Abe had never got on very well

with the Grigsby family. They were the richest people in Gentryville, and Abe thought they put on airs. He also thought they didn't treat his sister Sarah well after she married one of the Grigsby boys. So he wrote a poem which had the whole town laughing at the Grigsbys. Abe also wrote stories he called "Chronicles" which he pretended were newly discovered parts of the Bible: Everybody knew that these stories poked fun at the Grigsbys.

One of these was the story of the double wedding of two Grigsby boys—a wedding to which Abe was not invited. Though Abe wasn't there he had friends who were, and he plotted with them to get things mixed up. His allies carried out the plot so well that the Grigsby boys almost got married to the wrong girls. The "Chronicle" Abe wrote about the wedding didn't mention that he had anything to do with the mix-up, but it did show a suspicious lot of knowledge about just what happened.

The Grigsbys didn't like either the joke or the story, although almost everybody in Gentryville thought the whole affair was very funny. Some people say it was this joke and the "Chronicle" about it which led to a big fight. At any rate William, one of the Grigsby boys, challenged Abe to a fight. Abe looked down at William, who was much smaller, and shook his head. He said he figured his stepbrother John would be about the right size. Abe persuaded

John to take on the fight. A big crowd came to watch, standing in a circle, inside which the fighters had to stay. William and John, stripped to the waist, stepped into the circle and began to pound each other.

Before long, Abe, towering above the crowd, could see that his brother was being badly beaten. Maybe he was sorry he had got John into this. Or maybe he didn't want people to think he had been afraid to fight. Anyway he stepped into the ring, grabbed William Grigsby, and threw him right out into the crowd.

Then, remembering how he'd seen bucks boss a whole herd of deer at the salt lick near his home, Abe called out, "I'm the buck of this lick. If any of you want to try it, come on and whet your horns."

That started a free-for-all, with Grigsby friends and Lincoln friends slugging and "wrassling" each other to their hearts' content. Nobody is sure which side won, but everybody there agreed it was a good fight. They also agreed Abe was the best fighter of all. He was really buck of the lick, and not because he went around picking quarrels. He didn't.

Most people respected him because he was funny and smart and knew a great many things. There weren't many fights like this. Abe was too busy in school and out and with what he wanted to do—and that was learning. As he said later, he was "a learner always."



Chapter VI: ABE MOVES AGAIN

WHILE ABE was working on the river as a ferryman, he saw thousands of people moving West. These movers would go as far as they could by boat and then push on by ox trains or even on foot.

Abe understood moving. He knew his grandfather had come to Kentucky from Virginia. He himself had moved in Kentucky when he was only three, and then he had come to Indiana when he was seven. It seemed that moving was one thing most people did.

When Abe was sixteen and seventeen a lot of people were moving to a place called New Harmony in Indiana. Some came down the river in a boat. Others drove through Gentryville in an ox train. They were

all going to a huge farm where everybody was supposed to work together to help each other out. No one was to make any profit from anyone else's labor.

Abe heard there were many learned men among these settlers going to New Harmony to try out what they called the socialist way of living. People said they had many books with them. The thought of being with scholars, and perhaps being able to borrow their books, interested Abe. But in the end he stayed home to work for his father.

Abe was restless, though, and he wanted some change. Many times he had seen the big steamboats going up and down the river. They seemed closer to the big things happening in the world than his farm work did. Possibly he could get a job on one of these boats. He had a friend, a lawyer, from whom he had often borrowed books, and he went to him and asked for a letter of recommendation to the officers of some steamboat.

The lawyer refused to give the letter and explained why. The law in those days said a son couldn't leave home and work for himself until he was twenty-one. The lawyer's advice settled the matter for Abe. He decided he would return home and work for his father or for the neighbors. He would turn over his earnings to his father until he was twenty-one.

But Abe couldn't get his mind off the river. One of

the neighbors for whom he worked had thoughts of the river, too. He was James Gentry who owned large farms and had potatoes, pork, apples, bacon, meal, and flour to sell or trade. Gentry needed a good reliable boatman to take his crops to market in New Orleans. He decided Abe was that boatman. He knew Abe had a reputation for being honest, and Abe was strong and a good fighter. He could hold his own against any tough "half horse and half alligator" who might start trouble. "Half horse and half alligator" was the name people had for river boatmen, and there were pirates among them.

Abe knew how to build flatboats, too. So Gentry put him to work, while it was still winter, felling oaks, making planks, and building them into a large, double-bottomed boat. Abe built a house on the boat large enough to shelter him and the other member of the crew who was Allen Gentry, the son of the owner. Abe shaped four long oars—two for the bow and two for the stern. And he built posts into the boat against which the oars could be braced for steering.

Early in the spring of the year Abe was nineteen, he and Allen loaded their boat and started to float the thousand miles to New Orleans. As the boat drifted along at four or five or six miles an hour, Abe had to keep on the lookout for lots of things—snags and sand bars and other flatboats and steamboats. He and Allen had to do all their own cooking on the deck of the

boat. And at night they had to beware of river pirates.

The two of them were relieved when they passed Cave-in-Rock, a famous pirate hangout on the Illinois shore. Many boatmen had been murdered here by the pirates who hid the bodies in a secret room in the big cave. Years later when the secret room was discovered, there were sixty skeletons in it.

Pirates hid out other places, too, along the river, looking for good cargoes to steal as the wealth of the North and the West floated down to market in New Orleans. One night seven of these pirates boarded Abe's flatboat as it was tied up to the shore below Baton Rouge in Louisiana. Abe grabbed a crab-tree club, and swinging it at the end of his long arms, he went after the invaders. The pirates fought back, but Abe managed to chase them off into the woods. Abe had saved his own life and Allen's that night, and saved the cargo, too. But as long as he lived he had a scar over his right eye to remind him of the battle.

In New Orleans Abe and Allen sold their flatboat for lumber and traded their cargo for sugar, tobacco, and cotton which was to go north with them by steamer.

Then they saw the sights for a few days. New Orleans was the first city Abe had ever been in, and there was plenty to amaze and puzzle him. As he wandered around looking down at the crowds from his great height, he saw gentlemen and ladies in fancy clothes.

He saw gamblers, and sailors from strange foreign countries, and slaves. He saw Negroes in chains.

Some of the things Abe saw seemed to trouble him, and when he was troubled he didn't talk much. After he finished his three months' trip and came back to his cabin on Little Pigeon Creek, he didn't have much to say about New Orleans. Often Abe would think a long time about things before he spoke.

The twenty-four dollars he had earned for his three months' work didn't go far to help his family over the next year. Things were bad on the farm. They never had been good, but this year the milksick came again. No one in those days knew what caused the milksick. They thought it was a disease like others that came in epidemics. Scientists know now that the milksick is not a disease at all, but a poison that cows get by eating the leaves of the snakeroot plant. Cows pass the poison to people through their milk, and the poison kills both cattle and human beings.

None of the Lincoln family died, but Dennis Hanks alone lost four milk cows and eight calves in a week. He said, "I'm goin' to git out o' here and hunt a country where the milksick is not; it's like to ruined me."

Abe's father felt the same way. He had set Abe to work making lumber for a new house. But he sold the lumber and he sold his farm. After clearing the farm and working it for fourteen years, he sold it for less than he paid for it in the beginning when it was just wilderness.

Abe spent the winter he was twenty-one helping his family get ready to move West again. This time they were going to a new frontier—out of the woodlands and onto the prairie in Illinois. This time they would go by ox wagon, and Abe would help build it. The big wagon was to carry all the things his family owned.

He cut huge trees and then sawed off sections from the biggest part of the trunks. With a hole in the center and an iron rim around the outside, these solid sections made wheels. He cut hickory poles for axles. He made boards and pounded them together into a wagon bed, using wooden pegs instead of nails. Three days after his twenty-first birthday the wagon was finished and loaded.

Before they left, Abe went to Jones's store in Gentryville and bought a supply of buttons and pans and needles and pins and such things. He intended to make some money by selling them along the way to Illinois. He was a grown man now and needed to think how he was going to get on in the world. When he was just a little boy he had begun to work for his father, and he had worked the full time he owed his father according to the law. After he got his family settled in their new home he could begin to work for himself.



Chapter VII: YOUNG MAN ON THE FRONTIER

Before he helped put the heavy wooden yokes over the necks of the oxen which were to pull the wagon, Abe had one thing to do. He went to visit the place where he had helped bury his mother when he was seven years old. Visiting the grave wouldn't change anything or help anything, but still he wanted to do it.

His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, had died when she was only thirty-six. She had died of the milksick, and the Lincoln family was running away from the milksick now. Abe's mother had worn herself out working before she caught the disease. Maybe that's why it took her away so easily. Abe felt it was only right to visit her grave. It might be for the last time.

When the visit was over and the oxen were hitched to the wagon, Abe shouted, "Git up!" The Lincolns began to move again. Abe had become the leader in his family. It was he who drove them to Illinois in the changeable winter weather. He would see that they were settled before he struck out for himself. His friend John Hanks had gone ahead to look for a new place on which they could live.

For two weeks Abe drove the oxen, and the heavy wagon creaked and groaned. At night the ground froze and in the daytime it thawed. When it thawed, there was often deep mud. But he kept on going West. There were no bridges over creeks. He had to drive right through them, and sometimes they were covered with thin sheets of ice through which the oxen had to break.

As the Lincolns moved slowly along—oxen were much slower than horses—their little dog padded along behind. At one ice-covered creek they forgot to put the dog on the wagon, and when they got across, Abe heard him barking at them from the other side.

Climbing down from the wagon, Abe took off his shoes and socks and waded through the broken ice. He picked up the little dog, put him under his arm, and waded back—his big feet and thin shins aching from the cold. And then he whipped up the oxen again.

As he drove on he passed many lonely frontier farms far from any store. Almost every place he stopped he was welcomed by people who wanted to buy buttons and the other little household things called "notions" which made life easier. He had grown up on the frontier and he knew how wonderful it was to buy from a traveling storekeeper something you'd always had to make for yourself. When the trip was over, Abe wrote back to Jones, the storekeeper from whom he had bought his stock of goods, and said he had made a good profit.

Abe was always interested in anything that could be done in a better, more modern way. That is one reason he had always liked to go to mill. He thought it was smarter to get a horse to do the work of grinding than to do it by hand. He had been interested in steamboats, too. They did more work than flatboats, and people put less energy into them than he'd had to put into sculling.

At one place along the way he saw another machine which interested him—a printing press. He had never seen one, although he had read every printed word he could find. Here was something to think about.

Abe kept his eyes open. There were lots of things to see and enjoy and joke about. In the same place where he saw a printing press he ran across the first juggler he had ever seen.

Much of the Illinois country Abe drove over was

prairie, treeless, and different from the wooded land he and his family had always known. Everyone said the soil was rich and grew wonderful crops of corn, but the Lincolns passed on toward the wooded area along the Sangamon River. John Hanks knew the Lincolns would feel more at home in the woods, even if the soil wasn't as good for farming.

And John Hanks was waiting for them there. He had picked out a site for their house on a bluff overlooking the Sangamon. He had even hewed out a few logs, ready for their cabin.

Abe stayed with the family on their new land and helped them hew more logs and build the cabin. He stayed throughout the rest of the winter and helped break ground in the spring. Abe and John, using a plow pulled by oxen, plowed fifteen acres and split walnut rails enough to fence the place in.

Abe stayed all summer and fall, helping with the crops, doing odd jobs. And as usual he told jokes and made speeches.

Abe had done a lot of thinking lately about something that was very important to the settlers. They needed roads, and the rivers ought to be dredged out deep enough for cargo boats to travel safely. People called such things "improvements," and Abe loved to talk about them.

He got his first chance shortly after the Lincolns reached Illinois. It was election time. One of the can-

didates was against improving the Sangamon River. Abe and John Hanks stood around and listened to the man make a speech about it.

"It was a bad one," John said. "Abe can beat it." So he got a box for Abe to stand on. Then Abe climbed up and explained a whole plan he'd worked out so that steamboats could go up and down the Sangamon. When he finished, John said with satisfaction, "Abe beat him to death."

Even Abe's opponent was impressed by the tall stranger's ability. Although he had lost the debate, he urged Abe to go on studying and speaking.

Abe stayed on in the new cabin, and he was still there at Christmas time when a big blizzard came. It snowed for two days and two nights, covering the ground two and a half feet deep. Then this snow settled and froze on top, and another blizzard came, piling the snow to a depth of four feet. People had no large supplies of food in their cabins, and they could not go anywhere to get food. There was only parched corn to eat—if they had that. Only the wolves could move freely on the icy surface of the deep snow, and the wolves ate well off the farmers' cattle.

In some cabins people died of hunger. In others they died of cold, and things were not much better in the Lincoln cabin. Abe started out to walk four miles to a place where he thought he might get some food, but even his legs were not long enough to get through the deep snow. He nearly froze his feet, and he was laid up sick afterward.

When spring came and the snow cleared away, the Lincolns decided they had not picked the right place for a farm after all. They pushed on another hundred miles, this time to flat land, to a place called Goose Neck Prairie. Here Abe helped build still another cabin, and he stayed in the neighborhood doing odd jobs.

Then one day John Hanks came with news. Back up north on the Sangamon he had met a man named Denton Offut who wanted boatmen to take a flatboat to New Orleans. John Hanks had been a boatman back in Kentucky, and Abe, of course, had already made one successful trip to New Orleans. Abe was interested, so he and John Hanks persuaded Abe's stepbrother John Johnston to go in with them.

Abe and the two Johns looked up Offut and agreed to take a boatload of stock and provisions to New Orleans for fifty cents a day each. Offut agreed to have a boat ready for them in March—that was 1831. When the time came, Abe and John Hanks canoed down the Sangamon and met John Johnston.

They found Offut all right, but no boat. The man had big schemes, and he talked big, but he hadn't done anything practical about the trip. So Abe and his companions had to build their own flatboat. First they built a shanty and appointed Abe to be cook. Then for four weeks they worked on the big raft, cutting all the timber for it themselves.

When it came time to launch the flatboat, Offut appeared and there was a celebration. A traveling magician dropped by about this time. He gave a show in the loft of a house near the shore where the new boat was tied up. At one point he said he was going to cook eggs in a hat. Looking over the crowd, he easily singled out Abe who stood a full head taller than the others. He asked Abe to lend his low-crowned, broadbrimmed felt hat for the trick. The hat had once been black, but by now, Abe said, it was "sunburned till it was a combine of colors."

Abe hesitated. The crowd began to joke at him. Why was he so slow?

"Out of respect for the eggs," Abe answered with a grin, "not care for my hat."

Everybody laughed. They liked the big boatman who stood towering above them in his blue jeans which were almost too short to tuck into the tops of his rawhide boots.

After the celebration Abe and his friends loaded the flatboat. They put corn and barrels of pork at one end. Into a pen at the other end they drove a herd of live hogs. On April 19 they shoved off with their cargo. But they only got as far as New Salem, a few miles down the river. There they ran into trouble.

A low mill dam ran across the river at New Salem.

Usually the flatboats just shot down over the dam when the river was swollen with spring floods. But Abe's boat was too heavily loaded. Its bottom scraped the top of the dam, and there it was, hung up in the middle of the river. The pigs let out terrified squeals. People from New Salem and nearby farms came running to watch the excitement and to yell jokes and advice from the riverbank.

Abe paid no attention to any of the racket. He was figuring out what to do. First he unloaded some of the cargo and the hogs into another boat. Next he bored a hole in the front end of the boat. That let the water in. Then he began rolling barrels toward the front end. This shift in weight tilted the boat forward. At last it slipped a little, then slid safely over the dam.

A great shout went up. Offut strutted around importantly, while Abe and the others plugged the hole and struggled to get the barrels and the hogs back onto the flatboat. Offut bragged that someday he'd build a steamboat to run up and down the Sangamon. It would have rollers to get it over dams like this one. And Abe would be captain.

Abe didn't hear Offut. He just shook his head and went on reminding people that rivers like the Sangamon had to be fixed so that modern things like steamboats could help them sell their crops and buy things and get from one place to another.

To save the trouble of sculling and to make the boat get along faster, Abe rigged up crude sails with extra planks and some cloth. Maybe the sails helped and maybe they didn't. Anyway, Abe was always trying to think of better ways to do things.

They had no trouble with river pirates on this trip. There were pirates around, but Abe was lucky. He tied up every night, and he also stopped during the day to have a look at some southern cities—Memphis, Vicksburg, Natchez.

No one knows what Abe had thought of slavery as he saw it on his first trip to New Orleans two years before. He was a long time talking about things that troubled him, and he didn't usually talk until he had made up his mind. But after this second trip he had made up his mind. Later he said with bitterness that he had seen "Negroes in chains—whipped and scourged."

Abe stayed in New Orleans a month. One morning he and the two Johns passed a fancy building, about the most elegant building Abe had ever seen. People were going in and out, so Abe took a look inside, too. There he found a very large circular room with imitation Greek pillars all around. Overhead was a dome with fancy decorations in plaster. From the top of the dome, light came through a kind of skylight.

Down between the pillars were little rounded al-

coves which looked as if statues of famous people belonged there. Instead, there were big stands like pulpits, and on each one stood an auctioneer selling people just as if they were cattle, or furniture, or machinery. The people being sold were black, and the people buying them were white, dressed elegantly to match the great domed hall.

The white people felt the black people all over just as they would cows or horses. Abe saw them do this to one Negro girl. And then those who were bidding for her made her run up and down the room just the way they would do with a horse they considered buying. The auctioneer said "the bidders must satisfy themselves" whether this dark-skinned girl was "sound" or not. That was a word the buyers used about horses, too.

Lincoln was shocked by what he saw. "Let's get away from this," he said to his two friends. "If I ever get a chance to hit slavery, I'll hit it hard."

A month in New Orleans was enough. After the flatboat and its cargo were sold, Abe started back for Illinois, working his way on a steamboat, stoking the engine that made the boat go. But even there he couldn't get away from slavery. There were slaves aboard, held to each other with chains. Abe went as far on the boat as St. Louis, and then he walked across country for several days to his family's farm.

He stayed there a few weeks, visiting and helping

out, but this was his good-by visit. He loved his stepmother and hated to leave her, but after an affectionate farewell, he finally set out completely on his own.

And when he was gone his father said, "I s'pose Abe is still fooling hisself with eddication. I tried to stop it, but he has got that fool idea in his head, and it can't be got out. Now I hain't got no eddication, and I get along far better'n ef I had. Take bookkeepin'—why I'm the best bookkeeper in the world. Look up at that rafter thar. Ther's three straight lines made with a firebrand: ef I sell a peck of meal I draw a black line across, and when they pay I take a dishcloth and jest rub it out; and that thar's a heap better'n yer eddication."



Chapter VIII: ABE BECOMES STOREKEEPER

It was August 1831 when Abe set out afoot to make his way in the world. He headed toward the Sangamon River, which by now he knew very well. Then, in a canoe, he paddled downstream until he came to New Salem, the place where his flatboat had been hung up on the dam in the spring. Something about this place interested him.

For one thing there was a mill at New Salem, and he had always liked going to mill. This one was bigger than the others he had known and was run by water power. Abe liked that—water power was more efficient than horse power. Farmers came from fifty miles around to grind their corn so New Salem was a fairly busy place, although fewer than a hundred

people lived there and the whole village had less than twenty houses.

Another thing that interested Abe in New Salem—the most important thing—was that Denton Offut had big plans for the place and big plans also for Abe. Offut was going to set up a store, and he wanted Abe to be the clerk. But the bragging promoter hadn't yet got anything to sell in the store by the time Abe climbed out of his canoe at New Salem. There was nothing to do but loaf around and make friends, and Abe liked doing that.

As Abe lounged along the street on that first day, he noticed a voting place. An election was going on and there seemed to be trouble. In order to have a regular election, people were saying, there ought to be someone to write down the names of the voters. The knowledge of writing was rare in New Salem. The men who were running the election had asked everybody around but found no penman. Maybe it was worth asking this tall stranger.

"Oh, I guess I can make a few rabbit tracks," Abe told them, and on his very first day in town he became clerk of the election. Abe wrote down the names of the voters as they stepped up and announced which candidates they wanted to vote for. There couldn't have been a quicker way to get acquainted with all the men in town.

The voting was slow, and Abe entertained people

in between times by telling funny stories. One of them was about a wandering preacher back in Indiana. It seems the preacher was a long talker and boring. People couldn't remember much about most of his sermons. But there was one they never forgot.

After the preacher got pretty well wound up and was going on at a great rate, the audience noticed that he began to wiggle in a strange way. He kept on wiggling, and sometimes he slapped his leg, or his side, or his back. Slap, slap, first with one hand then with the other, right in the middle of fearful warnings about hell fire and brimstone. This weird wiggling and slapping went on for quite a while.

It was too much for the fun-loving farmers. Church broke up early that day amid gales of laughter—but not before everyone present had discovered what caused the preacher's peculiar antics. A little blue lizzard had crawled up his pants' leg and proceeded to explore!

Abe told more stories like this as the days passed and no goods came for Offut's store. He was becoming known as a real comedian. People looked forward to his return when he took a brief job on a flatboat on the winding Sangamon. And when Abe came back, no one was disappointed. He gave them a yarn about his troubles getting the flatboat around the turns in the river. Sometimes, he said, the boat

rammed up on the bank and kept going for three miles out onto the prairie.

Offut's goods still had not arrived, and Abe filled in the time by building a cabin which was to be the store. Finally the stuff did come. Abe and the assistant clerk, eighteen-year-old Bill Green, filled up shelves and part of the counter and floor with calico cloth, tea, eggs, dishes, hats, hardware—everything a general store carried. Then Abe and Bill moved into the store themselves. They slept together on a bed so narrow that when one of them turned over the other had to turn over, too.

Offut bragged everywhere about how smart his big clerk was. "Some day he'll be President of the United States," he said. Offut also claimed Abe could outrun, outwrestle, outlift any man in Sangamon County. There were some rough and ready young fellows at nearby Clary's Grove who doubted this. The Clary's Grove Boys, as they were called, figured there wasn't anybody they couldn't outfight, and everybody agreed they could be plenty tough when they wanted to be.

Abe didn't like the idea of starting out in New Salem as if he were a bully who picked fights. It was some time before Offut persuaded him to take on Jack Armstrong, the leader of the Clary's Grove gang. But finally the match was arranged for a Saturday afternoon, and people came from many miles

round to watch. They looked over the two athletes. Abe's six feet four inches of lean muscle impressed them. He weighed about one hundred and eighty pounds. Jack Armstrong was shorter and built like an ox. He weighed two hundred and fourteen pounds.

Two big men couldn't have been built more differently. Abe had sloping shoulders and a flat chest. You wouldn't have seen great strength in him unless you studied his long, well-muscled arms, and his great, powerful-looking hands. Armstrong, on the other hand, had a chest like a barrel. It was easy to see the strength in him.

Both wrestlers had fans who supported them, and the fans bet whatever they had. Only a few had money. The others bet knives, or hats, or anything.

Abe and Jack agreed they would fight fair—no hair-pulling, ear-twisting, nose-biting, or eye-gouging. When they were both ready, Jack charged at Abe with all his might and tried to rush him off his feet. But Abe held him off with his long arms while he tried for a crotch hold. Abe knew if he could just get that hold he could lift Jack off his feet and throw him to the ground. But Jack slipped out of the hold, and they swayed and struggled all over the vacant lot where the fight was held.

Neither one was getting the advantage, and this made Jack angry. He was used to winning easily, and

here he was getting tired and out of breath. Jack lost his head and started to fight dirty. He stamped a boot heel down on Abe's right instep.

It was Abe's turn now to lose his temper. In one motion he reached out, grabbed Jack by the neck and shook him like a flour sack. Then he banged him down flat on the ground.

Jack's defeat was too much for the other Clary's Grove toughs. They charged. Abe moved away until his back was against the store building. Then he told them to come on if they wanted to. But Jack was on his feet again. He broke through the gang and held out his hand to Abe. Then he turned to his friends and told them Abe had been fair. "He's the best feller that ever broke into this settlement," he said. From that day on Abe and the Clary's Grove Boys were friends. In fact the Boys treated him as if he had earned the right to be in their gang.

Before long, Abe was a regular visitor at the home of Jack Armstrong and Hannah his wife. Often he'd stay overnight with them two or three times a week. Hannah made cornbread and butter and mush for him to eat. He brought the children candy, rocked the cradle, and minded the babies.

Abe beat the Clary's Grove Boys and everyone else at other sports besides wrestling. He could throw a cannon ball or a maul farther than any of them, and he could run faster. Once he rigged up some straps

so as to distribute the weight on different parts of his body and then lifted up a box full of stones that weighed a thousand pounds. No one else could do that.

There were other things that Abe could do, too. He could fold up all of his six feet four inches and squat down close to the ground with small boys to play marbles. He always liked marbles.

No one else in New Salem could do Abe's special barrel trick. One time he used this trick to help his friend Bill Green get even with a gambler who had tricked Bill.

Abe told Bill to bet the best fur hat in the store that Abe could lift a barrel from the floor and hold it while he took a drink from the bunghole. Bill made the bet. Abe took hold of the rim around each end of the barrel, then squatted down and rolled the barrel up his shins onto his knees. When the bunghole was opposite his mouth he took a mouthful of whisky, let the barrel down—and then spat the whiskey out.

It didn't matter to the Clary's Grove Boys that lifting barrels was the only use Abe had for whiskey. They thought he was a good fellow even if he didn't drink, or smoke or swear, and they called on him to judge horse races and rooster fights. They knew he was fair, and besides, he was big and strong enough to make his decisions stick.

Abe made other friends beside the Clary's Grove

Boys, friends who in many ways were the opposite of them. One was Mentor Graham, the schoolmaster. Abe visited Graham's log schoolhouse and listened to the lessons. He talked long with Graham, borrowed books from him, and found out from him where he could borrow more. Once he learned that there was an English grammar at a farm six miles away. He walked out, borrowed the book, walked home, and then began to read it at night in the blacksmith shop where he got light by burning pine shavings. He studied and studied this book, and when there were no customers in the store he got Bill Green to hold the book and ask him questions out of it. Abe wanted to learn all he could about language and how to use it.

Abe made lasting friends of customers in the store by being honest. One day he discovered that a woman had paid six and a quarter cents more than she owed. (In those days, there were coins worth less than one cent.) That night he walked six miles to the woman's home and paid the money back to her. Another time he made a mistake in weighing tea. He gave a woman only half as much as she paid for. He took another long walk and delivered the rest of the tea.

As Abe made friends, he asked them questions. People said, "He could pump any man dry on any subject he was interested in." And as Abe learned from his questionings and from his reading, he used what he had learned in speeches which he delivered

before the literary and debating society in New Salem. The president of the society, James Rutledge, said Abe had more than "wit and fun" in his head. This compliment pleased Abe particularly because he was beginning to be interested in Rutledge's beautiful daughter Ann.

Abe had plenty of time during that first winter of 1831-32 in New Salem to make friends, and to do his studying, and to do odd jobs like building a pen for a thousand hogs, or splitting rails for Offut. Business at the store was slow, and as spring came it got slower. Offut drank up any profits there might have been, and before long the store closed and Offut left the country.

Many years later Offut turned up again, still promoting schemes. He went around wearing a bright-colored ribbon sash over his shoulder, which was held together at his hip by a fancy bow. He claimed he was a veterinary surgeon and horse tamer and that he had a secret for quieting vicious horses. If you paid him five dollars and promised never to let on what the secret was, he would tell you the proper words to whisper in the horse's ear. No one who paid the five dollars ever gave away the secret, but the guess was that they didn't want to appear foolish for wasting their money.

After Offut left, a new job came Abe's way—a job that was brief but exciting—and it took him once

more back onto the Sangamon River. He had talked a lot about how much good it would do the farmers and business people if steamboats came up the Sangamon bringing goods all the way from Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. And now suddenly a steamboat appeared on the little river, right in the middle of the Illinois prairie. It was the *Talisman* loaded with goods from the East.

People all along the river were thrilled. They felt that progress was coming to the Sangamon. Abe, with others, went ahead of the steamboat, chopping low branches off the trees so that it could get through. A boy named Bill Herndon was in the crowd and saw Abe for the first time. He always remembered the tall young man who seemed to know the river by heart, and years later Bill became Abe's partner in a law office.

The water in the river was high enough over the dam at New Salem so that the *Talisman* could go up over it without getting stuck. But the officers of the boat were inexperienced. They didn't know how rapidly the spring flood waters of the Sangamon went down. And besides, they were having a good time at celebrations in their honor. They waited too long, and then they had to hire an experienced river pilot to get them back to the Illinois River where the water was deeper.

The pilot everyone recommended was Abe. He

brought the *Talisman* down as far as the dam at New Salem. But one try showed that he would hang the steamboat up just the way he had hung the raft up, if he really tried to go over. So the officers argued with the owners of the dam, and finally they got part of the dam dug away so the boat could float through.

Abe piloted the boat safely along as far as he had

agreed to go. Then he was unemployed again.

Back in New Salem he wondered what to do, and as he wondered he thought of a job that appealed to him. He knew he would like to be a member of the Illinois State Legislature. He could make a living at it by giving speeches and by knowing things and by thinking clearly. Abe counted over all the friends he had in New Salem and close by, and he decided to run for the legislature.



Chapter IX: CAPTAIN ABRAHAM LINCOLN

It was all very well to dream of being in the legislature. But elections wouldn't be held until August, and it would be a time after that before the legislators met and began to draw their pay.

As it happened, a job came along in the meantime, and it was the kind that would help Abe's chances of election.

A call went out for volunteers to fight against Chief Black Hawk and the Sac Indian warriors he had led across the Mississippi into northwestern Illinois. The Sac tribe was hungry, and they had come back to the land they had always lived on before the white man came and tricked them out of it.

To the Indians, land was like air—it could not be bought or sold. It was there to be used by those who had always used it. Longer than anyone could remember, the Sacs had grown corn in northwestern Illinois. They saw no reason to go hungry just because someone had pushed them off the land and then made laws saying the land belonged to the pushers. The Sacs came back home.

The white men, who had worked hard to make farms on the old Sac lands, felt the lands were theirs. When the returning warriors and the whites met, there was killing on both sides and burning of farmhouses. A strong government stood behind the newly arrived whites to help them keep the farms they wanted and knew how to work better than the Indians did.

Abe's people had always had to fight Indians to get a bare living from the soil. Often they had lived little better than the Indians they drove out. But as time went on the white men's land had grown more food and produced more things that people needed than it ever had when the Indians alone lived there. No one had ever really thought through a plan which would give both Indians and white men all the land they needed.

Whether Abe thought about these things, no one knows. It just seemed natural to fight Indians, and it

was a job. Abe was helping the people who were building up the country, who were his friends the kind of people he had to rely upon if he was ever to get anywhere in the world. And Abe was ambitious.

Abe was not the only young man from New Salem who enlisted for the Black Hawk War. The Clary's Grove Boys did, too. When a whole company of volunteers had assembled, they held an election to decide who should be captain. Two of the militiamen were nominated. One was Abe and the other was a man named Kirkpatrick, whom Abe had reason to remember.

Kirkpatrick owned a sawmill. One time he had hired Abe to move logs. This was heavy work even if you used a cant hook—a kind of lever with a movable hook which grabbed into logs and made them easier to handle. Kirkpatrick had no cant hook, and so he agreed to pay Abe two dollars extra for doing the work by hand. When pay day came, however, he refused to give Abe the two dollars. Abe's good friends the Clary's Grove Boys knew this, and they liked the idea of having Abe as a captain over Kirkpatrick.

When it came time to vote, Abe and Kirkpatrick stood facing each other out in front of the company. The militiamen then walked out and stood behind the man they wanted for captain. There were twice as many behind Abe as behind Kirkpatrick. This election gave Abe more satisfaction than any other he ever won later in life.

The militia were now entered in the records as "Captain Abraham Lincoln's Company of the First Regiment of the Brigade of Mounted Volunteers commanded by Brigadier General Samuel Whiteside."

Abe knew as little about discipline and military drill as the wild Clary's Grove Boys, and there were no horses yet for his "mounted" volunteers. For lack of anything else to do, he tried to drill his men in marching. He gave his first order as captain, and from the ranks came the reply, "Go to the devil!" Abraham Lincoln's Mounted Volunteers had joined up to fight Indians, not to go through any monkeyshines like infantry drill.

But drill they did after a fashion, and as long as Abe could remember what commands to give. Once he marched his men right into a fence because he couldn't remember the command to get them through a gate two by two.

Discipline was as new to Abe as it was to his men, and sometimes he himself forgot the rules. When he got his company into camp with other troops, there were lots of rules that had to be obeyed. For instance, no one was allowed to shoot off firearms in camp. Captain Abraham Lincoln forgot about this. He'd

never had much to do with guns, and perhaps he thought he ought to practice. Whatever the reason, he shot a gun, and he was punished by having to spend a day under arrest.

Another time he was punished for not keeping good discipline among his men. He had to wear a wooden sword for two days because the Clary's Grove Boys had broken into the officers' whiskey supply.

While Abe had no interest in getting whiskey for his men, he did fight for their rights when it came to food. His troop was getting very little to eat in this hastily organized war. Although the Army gave food to its regular soldiers, the volunteers were often hungry. Abe went and protested to the regular army officer who was over him, saying, "Sir, you forget that we are not under the rules and regulations of the War Department at Washington; we are only volunteers under the rules and regulations of Illinois. Keep in your own sphere and there will be no difficulty, but resistance will hereafter be made to unjust orders. My men must be equal in all particulars—in rations, arms, camps—to the regular army." This threat brought better treatment for Abe's men.

Nobody remembers which officer Abe said this to, but people do recall that there was a Captain Jefferson Davis in the Black Hawk War. This was the same Jefferson Davis who later led the slaveholders against the United States Government in the Civil War.

In spite of the better treatment Abe got for his troop, the men still smarted. They saw that the regular army officers lived better than the privates. For one thing, they had milk from two cows. Abe's men decided to "borrow" one of these cows for their own use. They chose the red one that had had her tail cut short. Then they went to a slaughterhouse, got a tail the same color, and fastened it onto the cow. Now, as far as they were concerned, the cow was theirs. The officers certainly did not own a red cow with a *long* tail. Even the commanding officer couldn't get that cow away from Abe's men.

The militia found no Indians to fight so they worked off some of their energy by staging wrestling matches. Abe threw every local champion that turned up along the line of march. Then one day a match was arranged between Abe and another soldier named Thompson, whose friends claimed he was champion of all the soldiers in the Black Hawk War. The first man to throw the other one twice was to be the winner.

The two wrestlers started in cautiously. Each wanted to see how the other would be likely to move. It wasn't long before Abe announced what he had found out. Between shoves he called to his friends, "Boys, this is the most powerful man I ever had hold

of." Then Thompson got a crotch hold on Abe and threw him.

Thompson threw Abe a second time, but this time Abe pulled Thompson down with him. The Clary's Grove Boys claimed this was a tie—a dogfall, they called it—since both wrestlers were down. Thompson's friends claimed their hero had thrown Abe, and so he was winner of the match. A general free-for-all started, but Abe broke it up and told his friends to pay their bets. He explained, "If this man hasn't thrown me fairly, he could."

Abe had never lost a wrestling match before, and later when he told about his defeat he paid tribute to his opponent. He said that Thompson "could have thrown a grizzly bear."

Abe and the Clary's Grove Boys had enlisted in the militia for a month. That was as long as anyone thought it would take to drive Black Hawk and his warriors back across the Mississippi. In the month Abe had been scouring the country with his men, he hadn't been in a fight with the Sacs. He was free now to go home, but he didn't. "I was out of work," he explained later, "and there being no danger of more fighting, I could do nothing better than enlist again." This time he served as a private. He stayed in the Black Hawk War altogether for three months, and in all that time he saw only one Indian.

This Indian was an old man who strayed into camp

one day carrying a piece of paper. Some of the rowdies wanted to shoot him on the spot. But Abe could read the paper and saw that the old man was no enemy. An army general had written that the Indian was friendly to the whites and should be let alone. This made no difference to some of the men who had come out to kill Indians. They claimed the letter was a forgery, and without a bit of evidence they called the old man a spy.

This happened when Abe was a captain and could give orders. And Abe was angry. He wanted to give orders.

He towered over the men, and his swarthy face showed every one of them how angry he was. He stood between the old Indian and the soldiers.

"Men, this must not be done; he must not be shot and killed by us," Abe said, and he meant it.

Someone called Abe a coward.

"If any man thinks I am a coward, let him test it," was Abe's calm response.

"Lincoln, you're bigger and heavier than we are," came a furious cry from among the men.

"You can guard against that," Abe shot back. "Choose your weapons."

The men saw that Abe was not just an officer trying to feel important by giving orders. He was willing to risk his life in a duel with a private. They let the old man go. Much as Abe wanted the friendship of his men, he would not buy their friendship by letting them shoot an innocent person. And although his own grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, had been killed by an Indian, this Abraham Lincoln would not let an Indian be killed unjustly.



Chapter X: ABE TRIES POLITICS

When Abe finished his third month in the militia, he was far off in the northwest corner of Wisconsin. By any road or path he followed he would have three or four hundred miles of walking in order to get back to New Salem. And that was where he wanted to be. Elections were coming up on August 6.

After serving in the cavalry he was supposed to have a horse to ride home, but someone had stolen his horse. So Abe hitched rides when he could, sitting behind a horseback rider with his long legs dangling. But much of the way he had to walk.

When he got home there was only time enough to make a few speeches in New Salem and in places

around close by. Twenty-three-year-old Abe put on the best clothes he had. His coat was of coarse cloth like denim and shorter than was the style in those days —so short he couldn't sit on the coattails. His pants were of coarse linen, six inches too short to reach the top of his black boots. And he had an old straw hat.

He planned to make his first speech at a nearby town where he knew a crowd was sure to collect for an auction of hogs, bulls, and steers. After the auction was over, Lincoln stepped up on a box. But just as he began to talk in his high tenor voice, a fight broke out at the edge of the crowd and Abe could see a friend of his getting the worst of it. Down off the box Abe came, grabbed the tough who was beating up his supporter, and threw him a good ten feet away. That settled that fight, and the crowd gave the powerful young giant its respectful attention as he took off his straw hat and made his first campaign speech. It was "short and sweet," as Abe said, "like the old woman's dance."

As Abe walked along the country roads while he was campaigning, he stopped and talked to farmers working in the fields. And he did more than talk. He helped them with their work. He reaped wheat in one place, and no one could keep up with him as his long arms swung the scythe. Another place he pitched hay in a barn. He had friendly wrestling matches, too, and several times showed that he could

throw the crowbar farther than anyone else in the county.

Wherever he went people liked him, but he did not have time to visit the whole county. There were twelve candidates, and several of them were more widely known than he was. When the votes were counted, Abe was seventh on the list. He lost the election, but he had more votes than five of the candidates, and he was not discouraged. He saw that in and around New Salem, where he was best known, he got 277 votes, and all the other eleven candidates together got only 7 votes.

Losing the election meant that Abe was still out of work. He wanted some kind of job which would help him meet lots of people and which would also leave him time to read. Running a store seemed to be about the right kind of work. With no money at all Abe managed to buy a store, just by promising to pay. A little later he bought out another store the same way. People trusted Abe. Then something happened which Abe certainly did not approve of, but he benefited by it all the same.

The Clary's Grove Boys had a grudge against Reuben Radford who also ran a store in New Salem. Radford knew the toughs got violent when they had too much to drink. So he gave orders that they could buy only a little whiskey at his store. The Clary's Grove gang decided to take the whiskey anyway, and they

tore his store apart. When Radford saw the wreckage, he sold his stock to Abe's old friend Bill Green, and then Bill sold it to Abe and his partner William F. Berry. That left Abe and Berry as owners of the only store in New Salem.

Abe became a storekeeper because he thought he would have lots of time for study. And he took time to study instead of taking care of his business. Often he read in between waiting on customers. Other times he studied stretched out belly down on the counter. He also went outside barefoot, lay down on the grass, put his feet up on a tree—and read.

One day he found a book which interested him more than any other he had seen. It was Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, the most famous beginning book on the study of law.

Abe got it by accident. A man who was moving West in a covered wagon had a barrel he didn't need, and Abe bought it, as he said, to oblige the man. When he emptied the rubbish out of it, he found some books, including Blackstone. The first day he had that book Abe read forty pages.

Abe was thinking more and more about being a lawyer, but he knew he needed a better education first. A friend named Jack Kelso helped him with that. Jack knew long passages from Shakespeare's plays by heart. He also knew many of the poems of Robert Burns—and Jack liked fishing. Abe had no

use for fishing, but he often went to the banks of the Sangamon with Jack just to hear him recite poetry as he dangled his line in the water.

And Abe went to the home of Dr. Allen to learn. There he heard the physician talk against slavery and against whiskey. Abe had already done a good deal of thinking about slavery, and he had seen what too much whiskey can do to people. Denton Offut drank too much, and Abe had lost his job because Offut's store failed. Now Abe's partner was drinking himself to death. Abe had to run the store alone and it was failing, too.

Abe needed a job outside the store to keep him going. He became postmaster. He liked that job because it gave him a chance to read all the newspapers that came to people around New Salem. But in the end he didn't make money out of the postmaster's job any more than he did out of the store. There was a law in those days that newspaper subscribers had to pay in advance for the postage on the papers. When people didn't pay in advance, Abe laid out the money from his own pocket. He was never very good at getting people to pay him the money they owed. But he always paid his own debts, even if it took a very long time. And Abe owed a great deal of money—\$1,100—when he finally had to close the store. Abe said the store "winked out."

Now he needed a job again, but he did not want

any kind of work that would keep him from saying what he thought. The surveyor of Sangamon County needed an assistant. People recommended Abe. Abe walked twenty miles to see the man. The surveyor was a Democrat and Abe wasn't. Abe wanted the job as surveyor, but he also wanted to be sure that he didn't have to become a Democrat to get it. When the Democratic surveyor promised Abe that he could go on thinking and doing as he pleased, Abe was satisfied.

Abe didn't know a thing about surveying, but he set out to learn. He studied all day and sometimes all night. The schoolmaster, Mentor Graham, helped him. Abe worked and worked at the difficult mathematics he had to know. He got thinner and thinner, and people said he would break up under the strain if he kept on like this. He worked himself sick, but in six weeks he had learned how to be a surveyor.

Soon he got his health back as he went around in the out-of-doors finding out for people exactly where the boundaries of their farms lay. He took with him as helpers Jack Armstrong, the Clary's Grove Boy whom he had licked in a fight when he first came to New Salem, and Jack Kelso, who was teaching him Shakespeare and Burns.

Even though Abe made three dollars a day at this job, there were many days when he could not work. He began to get into snarls about money. He couldn't

pay all the bills for the horse and the surveying equipment he needed in his work. He was sued in court. The court took away his horse and surveying equipment and sold them at auction for \$125. The man who bought them was a friend of Abe's called Uncle Jimmy Short. Uncle Jimmy liked Abe, and he liked the way Abe husked corn. "He husks two loads of corn to my one," he said.

Abe hadn't gone to the auction where his possessions were being sold. After it was over Uncle Jimmy looked him up and gave him back the horse and the things he needed to be a surveyor. Abe was deeply moved by this unexpected generosity. All he could think to say was, "Uncle Jimmy, I'll do as much for you sometime." And Abe kept this promise. Thirty years later when he heard that Uncle Jimmy needed a job he got him one.

Although he didn't make much of a living, Abe did get the reputation of being a good surveyor. He was often called in to settle quarrels about the boundaries between farms. One time there was a good deal of argument about where the corner of a farm really was. The men agreed to let Abe settle the question. He surveyed for three days, then put his staff in the ground and said, "Gentlemen, here is your corner." The men dug down a few inches in the earth, and, exactly where Abe had indicated, they found the bottom part of a surveyor's stake that had been put

there three years before. Abe's survey had been accurate to the inch.

Another time, though, he made a mistake on purpose. He was surveying a town, and he laid out one of the streets crooked. He found that if he made it straight, a house which belonged to a widow and her family would be right in the middle of the street. It would have to be torn down, and Abe couldn't see how she would get another one put up.

Abe often did things like that to help people. One morning out in the country he met his old friend Dr. Chandler on foot leading his horse along the road toward Springfield which was twelve miles away.

The day before, Dr. Chandler had found out that a crook was hurrying to Springfield to cheat him out of two farms he owned. The doctor galloped off at midnight trying to beat the crook there. But his horse was exhausted, and now he had to walk.

Abe quickly took the saddle bags off his own horse, shortened the stirrups on his saddle, and said, "There, doctor, mount my horse and leave me yours, and don't let any grass grow under his feet on the way." They agreed where to meet in Springfield and swap their horses back again—and the doctor finished the trip in time to save his farms.

Another day Abe saw a boy chopping up old logs. The weather was cold, and the boy only had rags around his feet. When Abe found that the boy was chopping wood to earn a dollar so he could buy shoes, Abe told him to go into the store and warm his feet. Later Abe came in, said the wood was cut and the boy could have his shoes.



Chapter XI: ABRAHAM LINCOLN, LEGISLATOR

THE SUMMER after Abe was twenty-five he ran for the legislature again.

In the two years that had passed since he first ran for office Abe had made a point of getting acquainted with as many people as he could. Now, as elections came again, he walked all over the county just seeing people, lending a hand with the farm work, and talking. And this time he won. Four candidates were elected in Sangamon County, and Abe got next to the highest number of votes.

Now that he was a member of the State Legislature, Abe thought he ought to have some decent clothes, but he did not have the money to buy them. He went to a friend and told him he wanted to "fix up a little." The friend lent him \$200. Among other things he bought a suit of blue jeans—a cloth like the material used in overalls today. Abe had the new suit on when he entered the capitol building at Vandalia and began to meet the political leaders of the state. One of these, Abe was told, was a very short, very young man named Stephen Douglas. He was only five feet tall, and Abe said he thought Douglas was "the least man he had ever seen." But Abe was soon to learn that Douglas was by no means least in brains and ambition.

Abe had big new plans now. He even thought of going to college while he was in the legislature. He would study and so would Ann Rutledge. And he would try to save money to pay off his debts. He wanted to do that as soon as he could because he and Ann had talked some about getting married.

The trouble was that Ann had promised to marry another man. He had gone away, and she had given her word that she would wait until he came back. But he didn't come back, and he didn't answer her letters. Maybe he was sick, or maybe he was dead, or maybe he had just lost interest in Ann. Nobody seems to know exactly what happened, but finally Ann felt she had a right to think about marrying someone else—and that someone was Abe.

After sitting in the legislature all winter, Abe returned to New Salem and to Ann. He saw her often,

and they talked and planned. Next year, they hoped, they could get married.

But that next year never came. An epidemic of some kind was making people sick, and some of the people were dying. Abe got sick, but he finally recovered. Then Ann got sick—very sick—and she called for Abe.

Abe came and talked to Ann, whom he loved dearly, but he could not give the help she needed. Two days later she died.

Abe's grief was almost more than he could bear. He couldn't tell his funny stories any more. He wandered aimlessly around and often passed his old friends without speaking. But they understood and sympathized—and they took care of Abe until he got over the worst of his grief.

Back in Vandalia, Abe watched how government works and how politicians work. By the end of his first term in the legislature he decided he knew enough to be re-elected. He ran again, and again he won. This time Sangamon County had seven representatives and two senators in the legislature. As it happened, all the nine men were nearly as tall as Lincoln. They became known as the "Long Nine," and they worked well together in supporting laws they all wanted to get passed.

With Abe as leader, for instance, the Long Nine managed to persuade the legislature to move the state

capital to Springfield, and it has remained there ever since. Abe worked hard on schemes for widening and deepening rivers and digging canals. He was a great believer in these "internal improvements." And he was beginning to do a lot of thinking about slavery.

Already in 1837 in the little western capital of Springfield, politicians were talking about slavery. There were some people called abolitionists who believed that slavery should be abolished. Others believed that slavery should be let alone and even allowed to spread. And there were still others who thought that slavery was wrong, but that the United States Congress could not legally do anything about it. They thought each one of the different states had to decide about the question and make its own laws. Abe was one of these. He hated slavery but he did not agree with the abolitionists, and he said so in the legislature—although only one other legislator agreed with him.

The people in New Salem were proud of their Long Nine who had become famous for their efforts to get internal improvements. When the legislature was over, they gave public dinners for the Long Nine, and Abe received more praise than any other. Abe liked this praise, and he liked New Salem. But what he had seen in Springfield made him want to move there. It was a bigger town and growing. Abe would have more chance there to be a lawyer.

In March 1837 when Abe was twenty-eight he put all his belongings into his saddle bags, swung into the saddle of a borrowed horse, and set out for Springfield. He owed more than a thousand dollars—some of the debt going back to the time his store had "winked out." And he had seven dollars in cash in his pockets.

He tied his horse to the hitching rail by Joshua Speed's store in Springfield. He went in and inquired about bedding. It would cost \$17.00 to buy covers for a single bed, and Abe did not have that much. "Cheap as it is, I have not the money to pay," he said "But if you will credit me until Christmas, and my experiment as a lawyer here is a success, I will pay you then. If I fail in that I will probably never pay you at all."

Something about the sad, honest tone of Abe's voice interested the storekeeper. Instead of selling him the blankets on credit, Joshua Speed offered to let him share his own double bed upstairs. Abe accepted, and, after taking his saddle bags up, he came down and announced, "Well, Speed, I'm moved."

At first Abe shared a law office with John T. Stewart, a man he had met in the Black Hawk War. The office was above the county courtroom. An old wood stove provided heat. There was a table, a chair, a bench, a small bed, and a buffalo robe. The few law

books the two lawyers had stood on rickety shelves of loose boards.

At first Abe didn't have much work to do as a lawyer, and sometimes he didn't have a horse to ride when he went from one place to another. So he walked or hitchhiked.

One day he was trudging along a road when a man driving a buggy overtook him. Abe hailed him and said, "Will you have the goodness to take my overcoat to town for me?"

"With pleasure," the man answered, "but how will you get it again?"

He explained that would be easy. He said, "I'll just stay in it."

Abe had a way of making friends with strangers, and people began to come to him with their law problems. A farmer might be angry with a neighbor because the neighbor's pigs got into his corn field. There might be an argument about which of two men really owned a horse, or about who was to blame for starting a fight in which somebody got hurt. Sometimes farmers wanted to be sure they really owned the farms on which they had worked hard. Abe straightened out quarrels whenever he could without going to court. He advised old friends and new friends, and he kept up his interest in politics.

There was a lot of politics to keep up with, and sometimes Abe saved time and energy by lying flat on his stomach in his office over the courtroom, listening to the political speeches made there at times when there was no court. He just opened a trap door in the floor of his office, right over the platform where the speaker stood.

One time a friend of his named Baker, who had criticized a local newspaper, was speaking. The brother of the newspaper editor tried to get men in the audience to stop Baker. It looked to Abe like there was going to be a riot. To everyone's amazement he swung all the length of him down through the trap door and dropped on the platform.

Then he shouted, "Hold on, gentlemen, let us not disgrace the age and country in which we live. This is a land where freedom of speech is guaranteed. Mr. Baker has a right to speak and ought to be permitted to do so." Abe said he would protect the speaker, and Baker was allowed to finish his speech.

Other things besides politics and law took some of Abe's time in Springfield.

One day he was walking down the street and saw a little girl in tears. He stopped and said, "Why, what's the matter?"

"I'm going on a trip, but the man hasn't come to take my trunk. Now I'm going to miss the train!"

"How big's the trunk?" Abe asked. "There's still time if it isn't too big."

Abe went into the house. "Oho!" he cried when he saw it. "Wipe your eyes and come on quick."

The trunk seemed small on his shoulders as he carried it out of the house and down the street. The little girl had to trot to keep up with him, drying her tears as she went. At the station Abe put her trunk on the train and kissed her good-by. And that was that.

Before long, Abe was known around Springfield as a smart young lawyer who was always very fair. Often he did not ask for any pay. One time a man who hired Abe as a lawyer had been accused of attacking another man.

This case had to be discussed before a jury. Abe wanted to prove that there was a reason why his friend had got into the fight. All he had to do was tell a story to the jury:

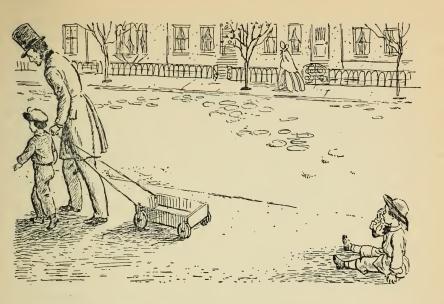
"There was a man going along the highway with a pitchfork over his shoulders. He was attacked by a fierce dog and killed him. 'What made you kill my dog?' said the farmer. 'What made him bite me?' the man asked. 'Why didn't you hit him with the other end of the pitchfork?' asked the farmer. 'Why didn't he come at me with *his* other end?' the man replied."

With this, Abe whipped up his coattails and with his long arms dangling pretended to look like a dog barking up at the jury.

The jury laughed, and they agreed with Abe that

his friend had a right to defend himself from a mean man in a fight. Abe won the case.

Abe was always doing tricks like that to help out what he thought was the right side. He could act like a clown, and after people stopped laughing they saw his point.



Chapter XII: ABE GOES TO CONGRESS

Sometimes, after the day's work was done, men gathered around the fireplace in Speed's store and laughed at Abe's jokes. And sometimes they didn't laugh—they just argued about politics. The best arguer against Abe was little Stephen Douglas.

Although Abe was a lawyer now, he intended to run for office again someday. He knew that Douglas was the man he'd have to beat if he was going to be a success in politics. And that wasn't all. Both Abe and Douglas were interested in Mary Todd. Mary was a pretty and strong-minded young lady who had decided that the man she married would someday be President of the United States.

In November 1842 it was Abe, not Douglas, who married Mary Todd.

At first Abe couldn't afford a home for himself and his bride. He was still paying back those old debts to people in New Salem. So for about a year Abe and Mary lived at a tavern in Springfield, and there their first son was born. They called him Robert Todd Lincoln, after Mary's father. When a second son, Edward Baker, was born in March 1846, Abe and Mary and little Bob were living in their own home—the home which was to be theirs as long as they stayed in Springfield.

Abe kept on with his work as a lawyer, traveling around Illinois, making more and more friends. In those days judges rode from one town to another. They would hold court in one place until all the law cases had been taken care of, then they'd move on to the next place. This was called circuit riding. On horseback or in a buggy, Abe followed the judges, making the rounds of the courts. And everywhere he told stories. He told them to other lawyers. He told them to judges and juries or to just anybody who happened to be around.

Abe sometimes made wisecracks, but the stories he liked best were the quieter kind that make you think for a minute before you laugh. For instance, if you got into a serious fix just because you were stubborn, he might tell this one:

Some boys went hunting for wild boar in the early days. As luck would have it, a fierce old boar sneaked up and attacked the hunters when they weren't expecting it. The boys shinnied up trees in a hurry—all except one who was determined not to give up so easily. He grabbed the boar's ears and hung on for dear life. Round and round they went. Now the boy didn't dare let go. If he did, he might get the worst of it, because boars who'd had their ears pulled were not exactly friendly.

The boys in the trees watched but didn't make a move. At last the one on the ground yelled angrily, "Come on down and help me let go!"

And then there was the story Abe had for people who wanted to know other people's secrets:

A lazy old fellow named Jake always got more prairie chickens than anyone else when he went hunting. Another hunter couldn't understand Jake's luck. He had a better gun than Jake had, and dogs to help besides.

"How do you do it?" he asked.

Jake grinned. "I jest go ahead and git 'em."

"But how do you do it?"

"You'll tell the other fellows," Jake protested.

"Honest, Jake, I won't say a word. Hope to drop dead this minute."

"Never say anything if I tell you?"

"Cross my heart three times," the hunter said.

At this Jake whispered in his ear, "All you got to do is hide in a fence corner and make a noise like a turnip. That'll bring the chickens every time."

Sometimes Abe told lawyers who opposed him that their arguments were as thin as "soup made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death."

One time at a political meeting a speaker took off his coat and paced around, shouting and talking a lot of hot air. Abe said in a loud whisper, "If someone cut the speaker's suspenders he would rise up just like a balloon."

When Abe wanted to explain how to get people to agree with you, he would say it was easier to catch flies with honey than with vinegar.

More and more people all over the state of Illinois began to know Abe or to know about him. They retold his stories. They talked of his honesty and the generous things he did. By August 1846 enough people knew Abe so that he was elected to Congress.

There were many famous men in Congress, but Abe did not feel shy among them. He wasn't one to keep silent if he had something to say. And there was something he very much wanted to say when Congress met the next year. A war between Mexico and the United States had started. Although Mexico was accused of invading the United States, Abe didn't think this was so. He felt that the United States had attacked Mexico, and he criticized the President, say-

ing that his war talk was like "the half-insane mumblings of a fever dream."

When Abe saw the war couldn't be stopped right away, he did the next best thing. He voted to send supplies to the soldiers in the Army so they wouldn't suffer from lack of equipment and food.

Abe often did things that way. He was courageous about things he thought were right. But he wasn't pigheaded.

While he was in Congress, he did another courageous thing. He introduced a bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. He hoped this could be done gradually and with the consent of the slaveowners. So he proposed that the government should pay them for the slaves that were freed. The bill was not passed, but people have always remembered it because it showed how Abe felt about slavery.

When he wasn't busy with his serious work in Congress, he often played with his two little boys. Sometimes he went bowling. And he loved to wander through the streets of Washington, which in those days were often muddy, with pigs rooting around close to the Capitol.

At other times Abe studied as hard as he had when he was learning to be a surveyor. Once people saw him go to the library, take out books, wrap them in his big handkerchief, tie the bundle to his cane, and walk away with it hung over his shoulder. No other congressman would have been seen doing such a thing, but Abe didn't care. It was a good comfortable way to carry a lot of books.

Abe entertained congressmen one day by making a speech that poked fun at General Cass who was a Democrat and wanted to be President. Cass had been in an Indian war, and he was being talked about as a military hero, which Abe felt pretty sure he wasn't. These are some of the things Abe said:

"Did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir. In the days of the Black Hawk War, I fought, bled, and came away. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent my musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent the musket by accident. . . . If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody battles with mosquitoes, and although I never fainted from the loss of blood, I can truly say I was very often hungry."

After Abe's term in Congress was over, he went home to Springfield, and he made a roundabout trip. He visited Niagara Falls and said he wondered where so much water could come from. He took a boat up Lake Erie. At one place his boat was stranded on a sand bar. The sailors had collected all the loose planks and empty barrels they could find and were forcing them down under the sides of their boat. After a

while the planks and barrels lifted the boat up high enough so it could float free from the sand bar.

This fascinated Abe. He thought about it all the way home. Instead of starting right in with his law work, he spent a long time in his office working on an invention that would get boats off sand bars. His scheme was to have a kind of bellows placed along each side of a vessel. Then if the vessel got stuck, the bellows would be pumped full of air. And the air would raise the boat up so it could float free—just as the planks and empty barrels had raised the boat he had seen.

Abe thought so much of this idea that he got it patented. Then he went back to work as a lawyer with his partner, William Herndon. He spent most of his time on law now and not on politics.

Abe was often away from home, taking care of court cases in other towns. There were many hours in which he had no work to do, so he and other lawyers thought up things to amuse themselves. One time he and the judge of the court got to joshing each other about which was the better horse trader. In those days people often swapped horses, trying to trick the other fellow into taking a bad horse in exchange for a good one.

Abe and the judge agreed that the best way to settle their argument was to make an actual trade and see who got the worst of it. They agreed that neither

of them could back out of the bargain, and they were to meet with their horses at nine o'clock the next morning.

Word got around about the deal, and quite a crowd collected to see what was going to happen. The judge arrived on time, leading the oldest, skinniest, most sway-backed horse anybody had ever seen.

A few minutes later Abe ambled up with a wooden sawhorse perched on his sloping shoulders. The crowd guffawed. Then they laughed even harder when Abe put down his sawhorse and said with a look of great dismay, "Well, judge, this is the first time I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade."

Abe's sawhorse was in usable condition, but the judge's plug was no good for anything at all.

When he was at home, Abe found plenty of hours to play with his two boys. He liked to carry them pickaback and take them on long walks around Springfield. Sometimes he gave them rides in a toy wagon. Once he didn't pay attention to his job. He got to thinking about something else and walked along with the wagon empty. The baby had tumbled out onto the street and was crying at the top of his lungs.

The boys came to visit Abe at his office, too. They would rush in, climb all over him, take books off shelves, mess up papers, and have a generally wonderful time. Abe's partner, William Herndon, didn't

particularly like these visits, but Abe never scolded the children. Any disciplining had to come from their mother.

One time he wrote to a friend, saying, "Since I began this letter, a messenger has come to tell me that Bob was lost. But by the time I reached home, his mother had found him and had him whipped, and by now very likely he has run away again."

In 1850 little Ed Lincoln died. Later that year Abe's and Mary's third son, William Wallace, was born, and in 1853 Thomas was born. Thomas was nicknamed "Tad," and he turned out to be the most mischievous and fun-loving of all the Lincoln boys.



Chapter XIII: ABE TALKS ABOUT SLAVERY

THE YEAR after Tad was born, Abe suddenly took a lot of interest in politics again. Congress had passed a new law which allowed slavery to spread into parts of the country where it had never been before. This seemed like a very bad idea indeed to Abe and to many others.

The new law was supported by Abe's old rival, Stephen Douglas, who was now a senator. Abe began to make speeches against it, and he decided he would try to get elected to the Senate himself. The country was being more and more divided by the fight about slavery, and he thought it was very important to hold the United States together. He could help do this if he were in the Senate.

Abe lost the election, but he didn't stop talking and thinking about slavery. It was the most important question in the country. But different people thought about it in different ways. The Negroes wanted freedom, of course. Some of them tried to get it by revolting against their owners. Others ran away from the South to Canada, where they would not be caught and returned to their owners. Wherever they could, they worked with white people to persuade the United States Government that all slaves should be freed.

Many white people believed that slavery was wicked and unjust. They said no man had a right to own another man. Many of them called themselves abolitionists, which meant they wanted to have slavery abolished. They held meetings and made speeches and published newspapers. They had big conventions.

Many businessmen opposed slavery, and they had an extra reason for doing so. They saw that modern factories and industry could not grow in the states which the slaveowners controlled. One reason was this: masters did not dare educate slaves enough so that they could be efficient factory workers. Educated slaves were almost certain to revolt. And so slaveowners only dared to use their slaves for the simplest kind of work on plantations or around the house.

Although the plantations were huge, they weren't very profitable because they weren't really farmed properly. The soil was wearing out. And so slave-owners wanted new territories in which to start new plantations on fresh soil. Of course, they planned to take their slaves with them into the great western part of the United States where very few people lived.

The men who opposed slavery wanted these new, unsettled lands to be open for modern industry and for free farmers who would work the land better than slaves did.

Up to now, the slaveowners had controlled the government of the United States, even though there were not really very many of them. Abe thought it was important to have the government controlled democratically by the majority of the people—not just by a few.

In 1856 the whole country grew more and more excited. A new political party was set up by men who were against slavery. They called it the Republican party, and they almost nominated Abe to run as their candidate for Vice-President.

Abe didn't have any idea he would be nominated. At the time, he was with several other lawyers in a town in Illinois where a circuit-riding judge was holding court. The lawyers and the judge all stayed in

the same hotel, and they all had a complaint against the hotel owner. For some reason, he always had a loud dinner gong rung very early in the morning. It woke his guests long before they wanted to get up. So the lawyers discussed this serious problem, and they elected Abe to solve it.

Next day Abe quietly left the courtroom just before noon dinner. He sneaked into the hotel dining room and swiped the bell. Hiding it under his coat, he had started to tiptoe out of the dining room when Judge Davis and one of the other lawyers hurried in. They came with the news that the Republicans had seriously considered running Abe for Vice-President.

Then Judge Davis pointed to the stolen dinner bell and said, "Great business this, for a man who hopes to

by Vice-President of the United States!"

"Surely, 'tain't me," Abe answered, greatly surprised. He'd had no warning that anyone would mention his name. He knew there was another prominent man named Lincoln who lived in Massachusetts. "I reckon it's him," he said. It wasn't till later that he really believed the news.

One of the reasons why Abe's name had been brought up by the Republicans was that he had made a remarkable speech a few weeks before. He often wrote out his speeches ahead of time, but this one he didn't. Instead, he just got up and talked.

At this time there were already many people who

said that the slaveowners would set up a separate country of their own if they didn't get their way about having slavery wherever they wanted it. Abe opposed the spreading of slavery, and he said there must be no breaking up of the country.

He spoke so well this time that the whole audience was thrilled. Even the newspaper reporters were so much interested that they forgot to take notes as they usually did. Everybody remembered what Abe meant, but there was no record kept of his actual words. This speech became known as the "Lost Speech," and it was as famous as many that were taken down word for word.

Shortly after this, Abe began to do some law work for a railroad, and he was given a free ticket, called a pass, to use whenever he wanted to ride on trains. A pass was called a "chalked hat" because conductors usually stuck the ticket, which was white, into the band of the passenger's hat, making it look as if it had been marked with chalk.

The passes were dated, and they couldn't be used after the day marked on them. When Abe's pass was used up, he wanted another, and this is what he wrote to the railroad:

Dear Sir:

Says Tom to John, "Here's your old rotten wheel-barrow. I've broke it, usin' on it. I wish you would mend it, 'cause I shall want to borrow it this afternoon."

Acting on this as a precedent, I say, "Here's your old chalked hat. I wish you would take it, and send me a new one, 'cause I shall want to use it by the first of March."

Yours truly,
A. LINCOLN

The hat in which Abe wore his pass was a tall, black silk kind called a "stovepipe hat," and he couldn't do without it. It was a kind of briefcase that he carried around with him. He stuffed it full of legal papers, letters, his bankbook, and notes for the speeches he was making. There was much about slavery in that hat—and under it. The whole country was rising to a fever pitch on the question of whether slavery should be allowed to spread.

In the midst of all this excitement, Abe still had time to do the kind, generous things for which he was so well known. One day he saved a man from prison. The man was Duff Armstrong, a son of Jack Armstrong, the Clary's Grove Boy who had been his friend for such a long time. This is what happened:

Duff Armstrong had been arrested for murder. His mother Hannah came to Abe for help. In the days when Abe was a young surveyor, he used to sit and play with Duff and the other Armstrong children while Hannah mended his clothes and "foxed his britches"—which meant sewing buckskin on the legs to keep briers from scratching through the cloth.

Now Hannah told Abe she was sure Duff was innocent. Abe agreed to be his lawyer.

At the trial a witness said Duff had got into a fight one night and killed a man by hitting him on the head with a slingshot—a little metal weight covered with leather. The witness claimed he'd seen Duff commit the murder. He said he'd seen everything clearly because the moon was so bright.

Abe asked some questions, then he sent out of the courtroom for an almanac. He turned the pages and began to read to the jury. The almanac proved that the moon was so low on the night of the murder it could not possibly have given enough light for anyone to see what happened in a fight. The jury agreed that the man who accused Duff was lying, and Duff went free.

Not long after this, Abe was nominated by the Republican party to run for the United States Senate. On the day they nominated him, Abe made a speech—one of the most famous speeches in American history. He said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."

Now Abe was in the greatest fight he'd ever made in his life. His opponent was his old rival, Stephen Douglas, who was called "The Little Giant."

For two months before the election, Lincoln and Douglas went all over the state of Illinois, holding big debates with each other. People flocked to the meeting halls to hear the two men argue. The next day people in the whole country opened their newspapers eagerly to read what Abe and the Little Giant had said. News about them was all the more exciting because many felt sure the two men would run against each other for President two years later. So the things Lincoln and Douglas said about slavery, way out in Illinois, in the year 1858, were listened to in every state in the Union.

Abe knew from the beginning that he didn't have a very good chance of being elected. And so he worked out one of the smartest plans that was ever made. In this contest for the Senate, Abe actually defeated Douglas in the election for *President* which came two years later!

This is the way Abe figured things out: the Republicans were against slavery and so was he. That meant he would get a big solid chunk of Republican votes. Stephen Douglas belonged to the Democratic party. It was bigger than the Republican party, but it wasn't such a solid group. The Democrats in the South wanted slavery, but in the North they were divided. Some wanted slavery and some didn't.

Abe knew that this was the Little Giant's weak spot. Douglas was hoping he could keep all the Democrats together and make them all vote for him. There was only one way he could do this—by letting

the South think he was for slavery while the North thought he was against it.

Abe deliberately forced Douglas to make statements the slaveowners didn't like. This pleased the voters in Illinois. They elected Douglas to the Senate, not Abe.

But the Democrats in the South were very angry. They refused to have anything more to do with Douglas. Abe had done just what he wanted to do. By his careful planning, by the questions he asked Douglas in the debates, he managed to split his opponents into southern Democrats and northern Democrats. Now Abe had a much better chance of being elected President in 1860. More important, it gave people who were against slavery a chance to run the government.

Abe had a wonderful time during the debates. Douglas traveled around from town to town in a special train. He had a band on the train and a cannon that was shot off to announce his arrival. But Abe just sat in any old train along with the other passengers. If the railroad schedule wasn't right, he bummed a ride in the caboose of freight trains. He and the freight conductor had a good laugh one day when their train was sidetracked so that the Little Giant's special could roar on ahead to the next debate. Douglas got more and more exhausted, while Abe put on weight.

Abe enjoyed the trick he was playing on Douglas, but that wasn't the most important thing to him. He had a vision of a great, free, developing country. And he knew that what he was doing would help the dream to come true.



Chapter XIV: ABE GETS READY TO BE PRESIDENT

Although Abe knew he was going to be defeated in the election for the Senate, still he was disappointed. He said he felt like a boy who had stubbed his toe—"It hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry."

But, just as he had thought, people began to talk seriously with him about his running for President. Among those looking for a candidate who opposed slavery were the abolitionists. They knew that Abe disagreed with some of their ideas, but many of them thought he would do a better job than anyone else as President.

One of the abolitionists who had his own ideas about how to end slavery was a man named John Brown. He believed so intensely in freedom for the slaves that he led a small band of men into Virginia, where they tried to help the slaves themselves start a rebellion. John Brown knew that there had been many small revolts and that the slaveowners feared them. Now he hoped that a few men could start a big rebellion that would succeed in freeing all the slaves. John Brown failed. He was captured and hanged. But he became famous in the United States and all over the world. A song about John Brown was on the lips of the soldiers who fought against slavery when war finally came—a song Americans still sing today:

John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave, John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave, John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave, His soul goes marching on!

Chorus: Glory, glory! Hallelujah! Glory, glory! Hallelujah! Glory, glory! Hallelujah! His soul is marching on!

He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true,

And he frightened old Virginia till she trembled through and through.

They hung him for a traitor, themselves the traitor crew,
But his soul is marching on! (*Chorus*.)

John Brown died that the slave might be free, John Brown died that the slave might be free, John Brown died that the slave might be free, And his soul is marching on! (*Chorus*.)

The stars of Heaven are looking kindly down, The stars of Heaven are looking kindly down, The stars of Heaven are looking kindly down On the grave of old John Brown. (*Chorus*.)

Now has come the glorious jubilee, Now has come the glorious jubilee, Now has come the glorious jubilee, When all mankind are free. (*Chorus*.)

Abe was now so famous that he was asked to speak to a meeting of the most important people in New York City. He talked in a building called Cooper Union, and his "Cooper Union speech" won him great admiration. "Here is a man who could be President," people in the eastern part of the country began to say. From now on Abe worked hard to make friends who would support him. He had decided he really did want to be President of the United States.

Of course, he had to be nominated first. When the Republicans met in Chicago to decide on their candidate, thousands and thousands of people came from all over to say that they wanted Abe. Railroads had to run special trains. Forty thousand people in all poured into Chicago. The meeting hall could hold only ten thousand. The others milled around outside, shouting and cheering for Abe. And Abe was nominated.

At home in Springfield the Lincoln family waited for the news. Abe had decided not to go to Chicago. Instead, he sat in the office of the local paper, joking and talking. At last a messenger brought a telegram that said the Republicans had chosen Abe as their candidate for President.

"I reckon there's a little short woman down at our house who would like to hear the news," Abe said, and he went home to report to Mary.

All over the states that were opposed to slavery, people celebrated Abe's nomination. They burned tar barrels at night and held torchlight parades. Everywhere they sang:

Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness, Out of the wilderness, out of the wilderness, Old Abe Lincoln came out of the wilderness, Down in Illinois.

Now that Abe was so famous, he had to have his picture taken many times for posters and news stories and election handbills. Portrait painters came, too, and put his long, sad-looking face on canvas.

One day a barefoot boy sneaked into the room

where Abe was sitting for an artist. He wanted to see the great Lincoln. Abe laughed and called the boy over to shake hands. Another time two boys crept in. Abe said to one of them, "What's your name?"

"Folks," the boy answered.

"Well, that's wrong," Abe said, pretending to be serious. "Don't you see that you're only one, and 'folks' means more than one? Tell your father I say your name should be Folk." Abe shook hands and patted the boy on the head.

The other boy said his name was Knotts.

"Well, if there isn't another mistake!" Abe laughed. "Don't you see that you're only one, and 'knotts' means more than one? Tell your father I say your name should be Knott!" Then he shook hands with this boy and patted him on the head, too.

Young Tad Lincoln was playing around the house one day when he saw one of the unfinished portraits of his father. He yelled out to another boy who was visiting him, "Come here, Jim. Here's another Old Abe." Lincoln heard him and laughed.

While the painters were working, Abe sat and swapped stories with them. Here is one which an artist told and which Abe loved to tell afterward.

It seems there was a politician who needed a horse to take him to a convention. He went to the livery stable and rented one from a man who didn't like his politics. The horse went so slowly that the convention was over before they got there, and the politician didn't get nominated for a job he wanted. When he took the horse back, he said to the liveryman, "See here, you've been training this animal to be a hearse horse."

The liveryman protested that the horse was as good as any in his stable.

But the politician said, "Don't deny it. I know by his gait you've spent a good deal of time training him to go before a hearse. But he will never do. He is so slow he couldn't get a corpse to the cemetery in time for the Resurrection."

The men who were managing Abe's election campaign did lots of things to attract attention to him. They got everybody to calling him "Old Abe" or "The Rail Splitter." When he was a young man, Abe had been famous for the way in which he split big logs and made them into rails used in building fences.

One time at a meeting John Hanks came into the hall carrying a fence rail. He took it up to the platform and announced that this was one Abe had split.

Somebody yelled, "How can you prove it?"

Abe examined the rail, grinned, and said he couldn't be sure. "But," he added, "I've split a lot better ones than this." That tickled everybody.

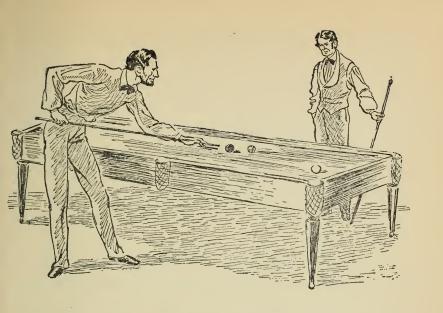
Some of the campaign pictures of Abe were deco-

rated with split rail fences. They went all over the country. A little girl in a small New York town saw one of them and wrote Abe a letter which said:

"I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you should be President of the United States very much, so I hope you won't think me very bold to write such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am? If so, give them my love and tell her to write me if you cannot answer this letter. I have got four brothers and part of them will vote for you anyway, and if you will let your whiskers grow, I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you. You would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers, and they would tease their husbands to vote for you, and if I was a man I would vote for you, too. But I will try and get everyone to vote for you that I can. I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty. I have got a little baby sister. She is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be."

Abe wrote and thanked the little girl for her letter and told her he was sorry he had no daughter. He asked her if she didn't think it would be silly for him to start growing whiskers now.

But apparently Abe changed his mind about looking silly. Soon after he got the little girl's letter, he began to grow a beard, the first one he'd ever worn in his life.



Chapter XV: THE LINCOLNS MOVE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

At last election day came. The whole United States was worked up with excitement. Abe knew how important it was for him to win, and naturally he felt nervous and restless. He walked around Springfield. Once he stopped and played catch with a lawyer friend of his. "Tossing ball" they called it. He played several games of billiards. Then he settled down in a big armchair in the newspaper office to wait for the news. When word came that he was to be the next President, he was happy, but he also knew what a hard job it was going to be.

Abe was elected on November 6, 1860, but in

those days a new President didn't actually start to work until four months later, in March of the following year. Much happened in those four months. As soon as the slave-owning states knew that Abe had won, they knew their power over the government had ended. One by one these states seceded—that is, they said they were no longer part of the United States. They set up their own governments and joined together in what they called the Confederate States of America.

All this was done before Abe went to Washington. It was clear to everyone that a war would surely come between the United States and the Confederate States. It happened that all the Confederate States were in the South, and people got into the habit of saying that the South was on one side and the North on the other. But the disagreement hadn't just started because northerners and southerners were against each other. The fight was really between two groups of people who had very different ideas.

One group believed in better, more modern, more efficient ways of doing things, and this included the idea that white men and black men had the same democratic rights. A great many people who belonged to this group actually lived in the South.

The other group held onto old-fashioned ways. They wanted slavery to continue, although most other modern countries had already ended slavery. They did not like the ideas of industry and science and education for everybody. And there were northerners as well as slaveowners who supported the Confederate States.

Before Abe went to Washington, he had to take care of a number of things. He rented his simple, ordinary kind of house and sold the furniture. He sold his cow, too—the cow he'd often milked himself in the years when he was becoming famous. He couldn't take care of these chores all at once because he had to see people who came from all over the country. Some of them just wanted to congratulate him, but most of them wanted him to promise them jobs or do them favors of some kind.

Abe did not like talking to those who just came hoping for easy jobs, but he did enjoy visiting with some of the Republican leaders who came. One of them stayed overnight. The next morning at breakfast the guest said how good the sausages were in this part of the country where "hogs were cheaper than dogs." Abe gave him a sly look and said that reminded him of a story:

There was a grocer in Illinois who was supposed to make good pure pork sausage. People bought lots of it until the grocer had a quarrel with a neighbor. On Saturday when the store was full of customers buying the famous sausage, the neighbor stalked in carrying two large dead cats. He slapped them down on the meat counter and shouted so everybody could hear, "That makes seven for today. I'll come back Monday and get my pay."

At last almost everything was ready for the trip to Washington. Abe wrote a speech he intended to make at the inauguration ceremonies that are always held when a President takes office. He hoped this speech would help to prevent a war. Then he rode across the state of Illinois to visit his stepmother.

He found her in the little log cabin which he himself had helped to build when his family finally settled down. After a good long talk with his stepmother, Abe said good-by. Later she told people that she was sure then she would never again see her son alive. Old Hannah Armstrong, the wife of Jack Armstrong and the mother of Duff, shared this same fear. There had been so much talk of violence and so much hatred against Abe by those who were slaveowners or friends of slaveowners.

"They'll kill ye, Abe," she said.

And he replied, "Hannah, if they do kill me, I shall never die another death." Then he went calmly back to Springfield.

Many friends came to see Abe at his home. One was a hatmaker who brought a present—a new tall black silk hat. Abe turned to Mary and said, "Well, wife, if nothing else comes out of this scrape, we're going to have some new clothes."

Abe started out from Springfield alone. Then Mary and the three boys joined him, and they all went on together. Time and time again their train stopped so that people could see the new President.

Instead of going straight to Washington, they made a zigzag trip, visiting many towns and cities on the way. In New York City the whole family went one afternoon to see Barnum's Museum. They looked at freaks and animals and all kinds of things that Barnum later turned into a circus.

Bob, who was old enough now to be in college, almost got Abe into real trouble once along the way. He had been carrying the case in which Abe had put his inaugural speech. Suddenly Bob realized that the case was gone. He had mislaid it somewhere. The speech, which Abe hoped would prevent war, was lost. Fortunately it was found after considerable search. For the first time in his life Abe got really angry at one of his boys, and he kept the case in his own hands for the rest of the trip.

Something even more serious happened during the last part of the trip. The famous detective, Allan Pinkerton, came to Abe and told him there was a plot to assassinate him when he went through Baltimore.

"But why—why do they want to kill me?" Abe asked.

He could not understand yet how much the

friends of the slaveowners hated him. They hated him because he, more than anyone else, had broken their control of the government of the whole United States. Many of them were willing to kill the President, or start a war if they had to, in order to have a government they could run without interference from the majority of the people.

Pinkerton told Abe how the plot had been worked out. In those days trains headed for Washington stopped on one side of Baltimore, and the engine was uncoupled. Then the passenger cars were pulled across the city by horses. At the other side another engine was coupled on. The plotters had decided to attack the President's car as horses pulled it slowly through the city.

At last Abe was convinced that Pinkerton knew what he was talking about. He agreed to go to Washington earlier than he had planned, taking a train that would cross Baltimore at night.

No one was told about this change in schedule. Abe went to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he was supposed to stay overnight. But at six o'clock in the evening he left his hotel and stepped into a carriage that was waiting. In his pocket he carried a soft felt hat which he was going to wear as a disguise, because people were used to seeing him in a tall silk one.

Nobody suspected what Abe was up to. But even if anyone had guessed, it would have been impossible

to send word out of Harrisburg that night. All telegraph wires from the city had been cut. (There were no telephones in those days.)

Abe rode away in a special train with only a bodyguard for company. His car crossed Baltimore in the dead of night. Soon he was safe in Washington.

By that time the telegraph wires at Harrisburg had been mended, and a message reached there in code. It said, "Plums delivered nuts safely." This was the signal that Abe had arrived safely at the end of his journey. Now he could be inaugurated as President. The first attempt at violence by friends of the slaveowners had failed.

But only a few weeks after Abe became President, the Confederates tried violence again. They fired on Fort Sumter, a United States Government fort in the bay at Charleston, South Carolina. The Civil War had been started by the slaveowners. Now Abe had a greater responsibility than any President had ever had—even George Washington.



Chapter XVI: ABE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

THE LINCOLN family had moved into the White House in Washington. Bob was almost eighteen years old, so he spent most of his time away from home at college. Willie was ten, and Tad was eight. While Mary Lincoln was busy discovering all the things that a President's wife should know about such a huge new home, the two little boys explored the attic and the garden and the stables. They didn't know anyone in Washington yet, but it wasn't long before they found friends who had just as much mischief in them as the Lincoln children.

One day two very well-dressed boys sneaked through the White House garden gate and asked the

gardener to tell Willie and Tad that Holley and Bud Taft had come to call. They found the two young Lincolns watching goldfish in a water lily tank. From then on no one knows just where the four boys spent the afternoon, but when the once spic-and-span Tafts got home, their sister Julia said they looked as if they'd been hunting coons in the brush.

As the war went on, people in the Confederate States came to be called "rebels" or "secessionists." If you wanted to say you sympathized with them, you said you were "secesh"—short for secessionist. The Lincoln boys learned the names and used them.

Sometimes Willie and Tad went with the Taft boys to their church. It happened that a number of people who attended that church were friends of the rebels. Whenever the minister prayed for the President, they would get up, bang the pew doors, and walk out of church. This always amused Tad. It broke the monotony of the long prayers. "I don't see why preachers pray so long for Pa," he said.

One Sunday a young army lieutenant decided he'd stop all such disrespect for the President. He ordered everyone to remain in church during prayers. Tad was disappointed because there was no racket that day.

"If I was secesh, I wouldn't let them stop me banging pew doors," he said.

"Yes," answered Willie, "and get put in the guardhouse."

"Well, I guess Pa could get me out," Tad replied.

Tad was always up to tricks. One day he found a Confederate flag that had been captured from the enemy and given to his father. When Abe was standing in front of the White House reviewing troops, Tad waved the Confederate flag behind his father.

Another time he and Willie heard rumors that the enemy might attack Washington. Tad bragged that he wasn't afraid. "You ought to see the fort we've got on the roof of our house," he boasted. "Let 'em come."

The fort Willie and Tad had built on the White House roof consisted of a small log, which was supposed to be a cannon, and several old, useless rifles. They also built rifle pits in the garden behind the White House. They organized soldier companies of the neighbor boys and elected themselves officers. Then they held a big review, with Abe and their mother reviewing them just as they did regular troops.

Tad and Willie were interested in all the soldiers who swarmed through Washington during the war, but their favorites were a regiment called the Fire Zouaves. These men were all New York City fire fighters, and they wore uniforms like those of some famous French and Algerian soldiers who were called Zouaves. They had big, baggy red pants.

When the Zouaves arrived in Washington they played all kinds of tricks. They let themselves down by ropes from the third floor of the building in which they lived. They ordered meals in taverns and then as a joke charged them to the Confederacy. They held mock sessions of Congress in the Capitol and then did stunts two hundred feet in the air on the roof of the Capitol where the dome was not yet finished.

Once when they saw a fire the Zouaves broke into a firehouse and got the engines to the fire before the regular Washington firemen arrived. Everybody who saw it talked about the way the Zouaves held one man by his feet upside down over the edge of the roof so he could point a hose at the fire through the window of the top floor of the burning building.

When these Zouaves became part of the United States Army, Tad was there at the ceremonies, holding Aba's hand as Aba stood in the midst of a let of

ing Abe's hand, as Abe stood in the midst of a lot of generals and senators and other important people.

So Willie and Tad naturally were interested in a doll dressed like a Zouave which they were given. They named him Jack and pretended he was a spy for the enemy. Time after time they had to shoot Jack at sunrise. They had heard that was what was done to enemy spies. Then, after the execution, they always held a military funeral for Jack in the garden. They dug up so many rose beds to make his graves that Major Watts, the gardener, decided he had to do

something. He held a conference with the boys, and a minute later they were knocking at the President's door. Abe came out to see what was going on.

Tad told him they'd come to ask for a pardon for

Jack.

"You want a pardon for Jack? You know, Tad, it's not usual to grant pardons without some sort of hearing. You come in here and tell me why you think Jack should have a pardon."

Abe sat down looking very much like a judge, then said solemnly, "State your case, Tad."

Tad started in, "Well, you see, Pa, almost every day we try Jack for being a spy or a deserter or something. Then we shoot him and bury him. Julia Taft says it spoils Jack's clothes. Major Watts says it digs up his flowers. So we have to get you to pardon him."

The President thought about it and said, "Yes, Tad, I think you've made a case. It's a good law that no man shall twice be put in jeopardy of his life for the same offense. You've already shot and buried Jack a dozen times. I guess he's entitled to a pardon."

Abe wrote this on a piece of paper and handed it to Tad:

The doll Jack is pardoned by order of the President.

A. LINCOLN

Then Abe added to his secretary, "I wish pardons were always that easy to give."

Although the boys had fun playing games about the war, they wished their father didn't have to spend so much time with military officers. Tad said he didn't like "those plaguey old generals." He and Willie sometimes showed very little respect for the important people who came to the White House.

Once Tad, who was watering the lawn, turned the hose on an important cabinet member whom he overheard disagreeing with his father as they walked into the White House.

The boys sometimes brought their goats indoors, hitched them to big chairs, and then drove them up and down the hall to the amazement of elegant visitors who were waiting for their father. Willie and Tad often interviewed the visitors themselves. If they found just an ordinary person whom they particularly liked, they would lead him around to a side door and take him in to see Abe, while high government officials had to wait impatiently outside.

Besides their goats, they had ponies in the stables, and they loved to ride them around Washington. They also had cats and dogs. They loved playing with these pets and so did Abe.

Once, on the same day, a cat belonging to one of the boys had kittens, and a dog belonging to the other boy had puppies. Both Willie and Tad were very much excited. Abe told the news to senators and generals who came in to see him on important business. The boys still remembered Barnum's Museum, so they organized a circus of their own one day in the attic, admission five cents.

They asked all the gardeners and guards and others who worked in the White House to come and watch. Willie had written out a program. Tad had tried to black his face with shoe polish. Holley Taft had on a fancy costume, and his brother Bud wore an elegant dress that belonged to Mrs. Lincoln.

Iulia Taft was worried about the dress. She also wondered whether the President knew about the circus at all.

"Yep," said Tad. "Pa knows and he don't care, neither. He's coming up when those generals go away."

Tad entertained the crowd by singing "Old Abe Lincoln Came Out of the Wilderness." In the middle of the show one of Abe's secretaries came angrily up to the attic looking for the President's spectacles. Important work was being held up. Sure enough, the boys had them as part of a costume. When the secretary went back downstairs, they still needed glasses, and they figured out where to get them. An old man was visiting at the White House, and he had two pairs. The boys snitched one of them. . . . And, as Abe said he would, he climbed up later to the attic to see the show.

Willie and Tad made a good profit from the circus,

and the money came in handy a short time later when there was a big military review. Both of them had been out in the rain and caught cold, so their mother was afraid they would get sicker if they went out again. The boys had orders to stay home.

But the minute their parents left the White House, Tad, Willie, and the Taft boys took their circus money, rented an old cart, and drove as fast as the mule could pull them. They reached the military parade ground just behind the President's carriage and drove solemnly along in front of the soldiers who stood at attention. Tad and Willie and the Tafts stood in the cart, just like soldiers, holding old rusty swords at salute.

The Tafts' sister Julia often went with them to the White House to see that the boys didn't get into too much trouble. One day she missed them all, and then she heard a terrible racket. The President could never work through that much noise, she knew, and she ran to find out what was going on. When she found them, they were all on top of the President, wrestling and pushing and yelling and trying to hold Abe's six feet four inches down flat on the floor.

Tad always did things with a great rush. One day he ran into the room where Abe was having an important conference, found something he was looking for, dashed over to his father, gave him an enormous hug, and then dashed out. Another time he was bouncing a new ball all over the house. Suddenly it hit a large mirror and smashed the glass. A crowd of people came running to see what had happened.

"Well, it's broken," Tad told them. "I don't be-

lieve Pa will care."

"It's not Pa's looking glass," Willie protested. "It belongs to the United States Government."

This thought impressed Tad, and he decided he'd better try to get out of the scrape. But then he heard Holley Taft say, "If you break a looking glass you'll have bad luck for seven years unless you throw salt over your left shoulder and say the Lord's Prayer backwards."

So Tad rushed out, got a handful of salt and threw it over his left shoulder, making even more mess on the carpet. Then he started on the Lord's Prayer. He got stuck at the second word. Off he dashed to find Abe's Bible so he could read it backwards. His search for the Bible ended suddenly when he heard that one of the goats had escaped from the stable. He and the other boys ran off looking for the goat, which they found peacefully chewing up flowers in the garden.

Abe played with Tad and Willie whenever he could, between meetings and conferences about battles. Sometimes he would take his two boys, the two Taft boys, and even their older sister Julia all on

his lap at once and tell them stories about the old days on the frontier.

In many ways Mrs. Lincoln didn't approve of the freedom which Abe allowed the boys. She was much more formal than Abe and wanted her sons to grow up to be what she called "gentlemen." Still she helped Abe a great deal. Presidents have to give parties and dinners and receptions for important people, and she liked entertaining guests. She also loved to dress in the most fashionable way. Abe didn't think it was very important what kind of clothes people wore, and he sometimes poked sly fun at her. One night she came into the room wearing a new white satin dress trimmed in black lace, with a very long train flowing out behind.

Abe was standing by the fireplace when the rustle of her dress made him look up. He studied her for a while, then said, "Whew! Our cat has a long tail tonight!"

Both Tad and Willie were sick that evening, and all through the party Abe kept going upstairs to see how they felt. Now Abe had a deep new worry added to the worries he already had about the war.

Willie grew worse. Shortly afterward he died. While Abe had to bear the great sorrow of losing Willie, he also had to bear the greatest troubles of the whole country. But throughout his sorrow and his worries Abe got strength from the people. He had

only one unbreakable rule at the White House: he wanted to see and talk to as many people as possible. He liked being with them and learning from them.

Abe's secretaries thought he ought to be let alone, and they tried to make rules that would keep visitors from seeing the President. But he paid no attention to them. After he had listened to visitors' requests, he asked what they thought about all kinds of things. He wanted to learn everybody's opinions, and he called his visits with people of all kinds his "public opinion baths."



Chapter XVII: THE WAR IS WON

During the first two years, the war had not gone well for the United States, or the Union, as people called it. A great army had been built up by General Mc-Clellan, but he didn't use it. Nobody is quite sure why, but for a long time he kept his troops from fighting, with one excuse or another. The Confederate troops won important battles. They almost captured the city of Washington.

Then they took a big old wooden battleship called the *Merrimac*, covered it with iron plates, and began destroying the United States Navy which had only plain wooden ships. Abe had always been interested in vessels of every sort since his days as a river boatman. So, when a Swedish inventor, John Ericsson, came with a plan for a new kind of iron-covered warship, Abe listened carefully. Naval officers were doubtful about Ericsson's plan. But Abe said, "All I have to say is what the girl said when she put her foot into the stocking. It strikes me there's something in it."

And there was. Ericsson was told to go ahead and build his vessel, the *Monitor*. It was small, and nothing much showed above the low, flat deck except a round metal gun turret. People said it looked like a cheese box on a raft, or a tin can on a shingle. But it was the best warship afloat.

The fast little *Monitor* defeated the huge *Merrimac* and proved that it could defeat any ship made of wood. Modern industry and science had built a better fighting ship than the Confederacy, without industry, could produce.

Abe had conferences with all kinds of people about war problems. One day a group of men came in with a scheme which impressed him. He sent an order to the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, saying the scheme should be studied. Later one of the men came back to Abe and said that Stanton had turned the idea down. "And he called you a darn fool."

"Did Stanton say I was a darn fool?" asked Abe.

"He did, sir, and repeated it," the man replied.

Abe thought for a while and then said, "If Stanton said I was a darn fool, then I must be one, for he is nearly always right and generally says what he means. I will slip over and see him."

Stanton often disagreed with Abe, but one time he gave Tad some fun by making him an honorary lieutenant in the Army.

Tad took his job seriously. He got some old wornout muskets and drilled the menservants in the house with them. They enjoyed being his private army, and one night, when no one was looking, Tad ordered them to stand guard around the White House. He dismissed the regular guard. Since he was a lieutenant in uniform, the soldiers had a good laugh and went off to their quarters.

Abe smiled when he heard what had happened, but he refused to countermand Lieutenant Tad's orders. It was only after Tad was asleep that Abe, the highest officer in the country, went out and changed the guard back.

There were times when Abe had trouble with the real officers in the Army. Sometimes the generals talked big about their battles but never seemed to win them. He said they reminded him of a man who bragged he had a dog that was a great wolf hunter. The dog just hankered to get at the wolves.

The man's friends doubted this, so one day they made up a hunting party and invited him and his dog

to go along. He made a lot of excuses, but finally he started out. When they found some wolves, the dog bounded off. Away went the wolves and the dog. It looked as if the dog was living up to his reputation.

The hunting party galloped after. Soon they met a farmer and asked him if he'd seen a wolf dog and a pack of wolves.

"Yep," he said.

"How were they going?"

"Purty fast," the farmer answered. "And the dog was a leetle bit ahead."

Lincoln said that's the way most of the big-talking generals were when they got into a battle.

One battle was fought very near Washington, at Bull Run. In the beginning it looked as if the Union forces would win. Crowds of people came out from Washington to watch the fighting. The way wars were fought in those days, it wasn't too dangerous to stand off at a distance, out of reach of the guns, and observe what was happening.

But defeat came suddenly. The inexperienced Union soldiers fled in terror, and with them the spectators.

Fortunately the Confederate generals did not know how easy it would have been to capture Washington. They might have come right on that day and seized the Capitol. Satisfied with putting the Union Army to flight, they did not pursue them all the way. Many times after that Lincoln could look through a spyglass from the White House window and see a Confederate flag just on the other side of the Potomac River.

The Union Army won a few victories, but it also had other defeats. Actually the Union had many more men than the Confederate States, and more wealth, more food, much better industry. But many of the best-trained army officers were slaveowners, and they were directing battles for the Confederacy. They had been preparing for war in the long months between the time Abe was elected and the time when he became President.

Many people who were known as Radicals had been urging Abe to win all the slaves to the Union side by setting them free. At first Abe said no. For one thing, the slaveowners had invested about three billion dollars in slaves, and some of these men lived in states which had not seceded—states like Maryland and Kentucky which lay in between the North and the South. Abe hoped to keep their friendship for the Union side. There was another thing that Abe feared, too. He was afraid that freeing the slaves would make their owners so angry that they would commit terrible acts of revenge.

But after two years of war, he decided he needed the four million Negro slaves as allies. At the same time he decided he must not antagonize the slaveowners in places which were not fighting the Union. So on January 1, 1863, he made the famous Emancipation Proclamation. This was an order which told the slaves in the Confederate States that the Union considered them free, and it invited them to join the Union Army. The order did not apply to slaves in states that had remained loyal to the Union. Very soon thousands of Negroes began to escape to the Union side, and they fought with great bravery. Altogether two hundred thousand Negro soldiers joined the Army of the United States.

The Confederate troops invaded the loyal state of Pennsylvania, but they were defeated at Gettysburg

and had to retreat to Virginia.

The victory at Gettysburg greatly encouraged the Union side. The next day, July 4, 1863, there came more encouragement when General Ulysses S. Grant captured Vicksburg on the Mississippi River.

In November that same year there was a great ceremony at Gettysburg in honor of the soldiers who had died there. After a two-hour speech by a famous orator, Edward Everett, Abe was called on to talk. He had had no time in Washington to prepare a full speech. It was only at the last minute that he was able to write down the thoughts that were uppermost in his mind.

Abe talked for only three minutes. The audience was already tired and hungry. When he finished

speaking, there was only a little applause. At first people were disappointed that Abe had said so little. He'd only got started when he stopped. But when they began to see the speech in print, they realized it was one of the greatest ever made.

Through all the years since then Americans have been repeating, "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. . . ."

As the war went on, Abe had kept looking for good generals to command the Union troops. He had fired General McClellan because he didn't fight and because he disagreed with the Emancipation Proclamation. At last Abe put General Ulysses S. Grant in command of the whole Army. There was a man, Abe could see, who fought and usually won.

But the war was not yet over, and a new election for President was coming up. Some people said that the country needed a dictator, and that Abe or somebody else should be that dictator. But Abe believed in the people and their right to decide how the country should be governed. He ran again for President, and this time his opponent was General McClellan whom he had fired.

Abe won. The Confederate armies began to collapse very quickly. Congress showed that it intended to abolish all slavery everywhere in the United States.

It passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which became law in December 1865. Abe approved this amendment which said, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States. . . ."

A month after Abe was inaugurated for the second time, the Union troops captured Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy. And Abe walked through the streets of Richmond the next day with only twelve sailors as his guard. Hundreds, thousands of Negroes had passed the word around that Lincoln was coming. Some, rejoicing in their freedom, kneeled down before him.

Abe told them not to kneel, but one old man said, "After being so many years in the desert, it's mighty pleasant to be lookin' at last on the spring of life." Many Negroes cried out their joy and stretched out their hands toward him.

To the Negroes, Abe was a hero and a savior, but to many of the whites in Richmond he was something else. They did not cheer, nor did they protest. No one even tried to shoot Lincoln, although it would have been easy. Here, the defeated slaveowners and their friends saw, was a very brave man who represented something new and powerful in the world. Here was a man and a world they would have to learn about.

Not all the supporters of slavery were willing to learn the lessons of their defeat. There were still many

who thought they could accomplish something by violence or who were willing even to kill a man for revenge.

One of them was an actor named John Wilkes Booth. He had been a Virginia soldier who watched the execution of John Brown who tried to start a rebellion of the slaves. Now Booth determined to kill the man who had at last been so important in helping the slaves get their freedom.

Five days after the Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at a place called Appomattox, Abe went to Ford's Theater in Washington. He was tired. He wanted to relax, and he had always liked plays since the days when he began to read Shakespeare.

Abe sat in a rocking chair in a box, laughing heartily at the comedy on the stage that night of April 14, 1865. Then, when the play was almost over, John Wilkes Booth quietly opened the door behind Abe's box. Before anyone noticed him, he shot Abe in the back of the head. For nine long hours after that, all the tough strength in Abe struggled against death. But a little after seven the next morning he died in a rooming house across the street from the theater.

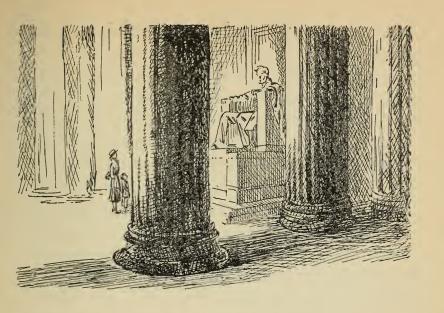
Meanwhile John Wilkes Booth was trying to escape. He knew Ford's Theater well, and he had planned the murder with great care. He had a horse waiting for him outside the theater. After he fired his treacherous shot, he jumped from the box down to

the nearby stage. But as he jumped, one of his spurs caught in the United States flag draped around the President's box. He broke a leg as he fell nine feet to the stage.

Even with a broken leg, Booth managed to get on the horse, and he fled to Virginia. Here, he thought, former Confederate sympathizers would regard him as a hero and give him protection. But he was wrong. He had killed a man whom every supporter of slavery had learned was both just and generous. They knew that Abe would not be too harsh with them after the war, and they refused to help the man who had ended Abe's life.

For days Booth hid like a hunted animal. Then on April 26 he was cornered in a barn. The barn was set fire, but he refused to come out. Then he was shot and dragged out. He died a little later, hated by all good men the world over.

And the people of the entire world wept for Abe.



Chapter XVIII: THE REAL ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Now ABE WAS DEAD—murdered by a man who wanted to keep some people slaves. Abe, who believed the majority of the people should rule, had been killed by a man who was angry because his side, the minority, had lost.

The great majority were for progress and against old-fashioned slavery, and they wept when they heard the news that The Rail Splitter, Old Abe, Father Abraham, was dead. People felt they had lost a dear friend and adviser—someone they had known intimately and loved. And everyone knew it would be a long time before the country would find a leader

who was so good at getting all kinds of people to work together for the good of all.

Everyone felt it was right that Abe should be returned to Illinois, where he had swung an axe and built cabins and piloted flatboats—where he had been a storekeeper and postmaster and horseback-riding country lawyer. It was in Illinois that Abe first struck out as a man and began the slow business of doing all one man can do to leave the world a better place. The people in Illinois remembered better than people anywhere the Abe who told funny stories, the Abe who helped people without pay, the Abe who never cheated a man in his life.

It was right for Abe to go back to the place where the frontier had been when he was young. He had died, just as his grandfather Abraham had died, on a frontier. He had led in opening up all the country to a new and better way of living—and, like many other frontiersmen, he had lost his life while winning against the past.

Abe's grandfather had died when an Indian shot him from ambush. But poor as they were, Abe's family pushed on and made a far richer country than had the Indians whose land they took over.

Abe, too, was killed from ambush. His murderer also was a man who wanted the old ways of doing things instead of new ways.

The millions who wanted the new ways, or just de-

cent human ways, wept. They stood in deepest silence, lining the streets of city after city, as the funeral procession slowly wound around the country toward Springfield. And everywhere there were some in the crowds who had some personal reason to love the man whom they mourned.

There were mothers of soldiers he had pardoned after they had fallen asleep on guard duty. There were those who knew that Abe forgave soldiers easily because he himself had made mistakes when he was a young man in the Black Hawk War.

Others had been at military reviews during the Civil War as Abe merely saluted the officers when they passed but took off his hat when the common soldiers marched by. They remembered that. And a few remembered how Abe had argued for the rights of his men in the Black Hawk War.

Abolitionists, who thought Abe had been too slow about freeing the slaves, mourned. They knew that in the end Abe had seen what had to be done and had done it with great courage.

And Negroes, more than any others, mourned. They were no longer property, like cattle. They were human beings now, with rights. They looked forward to owning their own farms or working for wages, the same as anyone else. And with Abe gone they were not so sure they would have all the chances they should have to do these things.

Children who had played with Abe knew they had lost their best friend.

People in all churches mourned, though Abe belonged to no church. They saw in Abe the most upright man they knew.

In faraway England textile workers sorrowed when they heard of Abe's death. They had gone hungry a long time during the Civil War rather than weave cotton which came from the slave-owning states. They wanted slavery ended, and they had helped Abe by doing what they could to keep the slaveowners from getting money for their cotton.

Unknown men and great men in countries where there was no democracy were saddened by Abe's death. They knew they had lost a great friend of democracy.

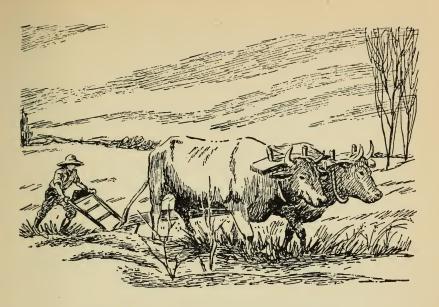
The common people knew Abe. He had come from among them, and he always stayed close to them, as they well knew. He was part of the people. He wanted for them what they themselves needed. He was better than anyone else at expressing what the people wanted.

The people loved Abe as he loved them, and Abe had faith that in the end the people were right and that right would win out against everything that hurt the people

the people.

APPENDIX





REAL DATES IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

- 1809 February 12, Sunday, Abraham Lincoln is born in a log cabin on a frontier farm near Hodgenville, Kentucky. His parents are Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln.
- 1811 The Lincolns move to a farm on Knob Creek, also near Hodgenville.
- 1816 The Lincolns move to southern Indiana.
- 1818 Nancy Hanks Lincoln dies.
- 1819 Abe's father marries Sarah Bush Johnston.
- 1820 February. Abe's new mother and her three children arrive at Little Pigeon Creek in Indiana.
- 1828 Abe makes his first flatboat trip down the Mississippi to New Orleans.
- 1830 March. Abe moves with his family to Illinois.

- 1831 Spring. Abe makes his second flatboat trip down the Mississippi to New Orleans and sees a slave market.
- 1831 Summer. Abe becomes a storekeeper in New Salem.
- 1832 Spring. Abe announces he is a candidate for the State Legislature.
- 1832 Summer. Abe is a soldier in the Black Hawk War.
- 1832 August. Abe is defeated for the legislature.
- 1832 Autumn. Abe starts a store of his own in New Salem in partnership with William Berry.
- 1833 Spring. Abe becomes postmaster of New Salem.
- 1834 Summer. Abe is elected to the State Legislature.
- 1837 Spring. Abe becomes a lawyer and moves to Spring-field.
- 1842 November. Abe marries Mary Todd.
- 1843 August. Robert Todd Lincoln is born.
- 1844 December. Abe takes William H. Herndon as his law partner.
- 1846 March. Abe's second son, Edward Baker, is born.
- 1846 August. Abe is elected to Congress.
- 1848 January. Abe in Congress opposes the Mexican War.
- 1849 January. Abe proposes abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia by paying the slaveowners for their slaves.
- 1849 May. Abe patents an invention for lifting boats over shoals.
- 1850 February. Abe's son Edward dies.
- 1850 September 18. Fugitive Slave Act becomes law.
- 1850 December. Abe's third son, William Wallace, is born.
- 1851 Publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a book denouncing slavery.

1853 April. Abe's fourth son Thomas, "Tad," is born.

1855 February. Abe is defeated for United States Senate.

1856 June. Abe's friends try to get the new Republican party to nominate him for Vice-President.

- 1856 November. The Republican presidential candidate, whom Abe supported, gets a large vote but is defeated.
- 1857 March. Two days after the inauguration of Democrat James Buchanan as President, the Supreme Court announces the Dred Scott decision saying that Negroes cannot be citizens and that Congress cannot prevent the spread of slavery.

1858 May 7. Abe proves Duff Armstrong innocent of

murder by using an almanac.

- 1858 June 16. Abe gives his "House Divided Against Itself" speech after he is nominated by the Republicans to run for the Senate.
- 1858 August 21-October 15. Lincoln and Douglas have seven debates in different parts of Illinois.
- 1859 October–November. John Brown tries to start a slave uprising in Virginia, is captured and hanged.
- 1860 February. Abe impresses important people in New York with a speech about slavery at Cooper Union in New York.
- 1860 March. Abe begins to work hard to get the Republican nomination for President.
- 1860 May. Republicans nominate Abe for President.
- 1860 November 6. Abe is elected President.
- 1860 December 17. South Carolina decides to withdraw, or secede, from the United States.
- 1861 January, February. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas secede.

1861 February 23. Abe arrives secretly in Washington after avoiding a plot to assassinate him in Baltimore.

1861 March 4. Abe becomes President and delivers his first inaugural address. Stephen Douglas holds his hat while he speaks.

1861 April 12. The slaveowners' army fires on Fort Sumter at Charleston, South Carolina, thus starting the

Civil War.

1861 June 3. Stephen Douglas dies.

1861 July 21. The Union Army is defeated at Bull Run in Virginia and retreats to Washington.

1862 February. Lincoln's son Willie dies.

1862 March. The Union iron-clad ship Monitor defeats the Confederate iron-clad Merrimac.

1862 April. The Union's Admiral Farragut captures New Orleans after forcing his way up the Mississippi.

- 1862 June. After being frequently urged by Lincoln to fight, General McClellan gets almost within sight of Richmond, the Confederate capital, where he waits three weeks and is then defeated.
- 1862 July. Lincoln decides to free the slaves after the next Union victory.
- 1862 September. General McClellan wins the battle of Antietam and Lincoln announces he will free the slaves January 1 wherever there is still rebellion at that time.
- 1862 October. Lincoln visits McClellan and urges him to pursue Confederate General Lee's army, but Mc-Clellan moves too late.
- 1862 December. The Union loses the battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia.

1863 July 1-3. The Union Army under General Meade

defeats Confederate soldiers under General Lee at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

1863 July 4. The Union's General Grant captures Vicksburg, Mississippi, thus giving the Union control of the whole Mississippi River.

1863 November. Lincoln makes his "Gettysburg Ad-

dress."

- 1864 March. Lincoln makes General Grant commander of all the armies of the Union.
- 1864 May. The Union's General Sherman starts toward Atlanta, Georgia, to cut the Confederacy in two. General Grant moves toward the Confederate capital at Richmond, but loses the Battle of the Wilderness, and battles at Spottsylvania Court House, and at Cold Harbor, Virginia.

1864 June. Lincoln is nominated again to run for Presi-

dent.

- 1864 August. The northern Democrats nominate General McClellan, whom Lincoln had fired, to run for President.
- 1864 November. The people elect Lincoln for a second term as President.
- 1864 December. General Sherman completes his march which splits the Confederacy.
- 1865 March 4. Lincoln begins his second term as President and makes his second inaugural address.
- 1865 April 3-4. Union troops under General Grant capture Richmond, and Lincoln walks through the city with a very small bodyguard.

1865 April 9. Confederate General Lee surrenders to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

- 1865 April 14. John Wilkes Booth, a supporter of slavery, shoots Lincoln in Ford's Theater in Washington.
- 1865 April 15. Lincoln dies.
- 1865 May 3. Lincoln's body returns to his home town, Springfield, Illinois, after passing through many sorrowing cities on the way.

THINGS THAT LINCOLN REALLY SAID

Abraham Lincoln wrote many wonderful things that are true and important for us today. Altogether he wrote more words than Shakespeare did. He wrote more words than there are in the whole Bible. Here are a few of them.

The Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

Lincoln said this at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, at a ceremony in honor of the men who died in the Battle of Gettysburg:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The

world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Advice to Lawyers, about 1850

Resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer.

Letter to Joshua Speed, August 24, 1855

Joshua Speed was the man who shared his bed with Lincoln when he first came to Springfield, and they remained close friends. When Lincoln wrote this letter, there was a political party called the Know-Nothings which was made up of people who hated immigrants and Catholics. Lincoln wrote to Speed:

As a nation we began by declaring that "All men are created equal." We now practically read it "All men are created equal, except Negroes." When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "All men are created equal, except Negroes and foreigners and Catholics."

From a speech in Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858

In a speech about the problem of slavery, Lincoln made a phrase from the Bible bring home to his listeners the most important thing before the people:

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

From a letter to William Herndon, February 15, 1848

Lincoln believed that the Constitution did not give President Polk the right to declare war against Mexico. He wrote to his law partner, William Herndon:

Allow the President to invade a neighboring nation whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion, and you allow him to do so whenever he may choose to say he deems it necessary for such purpose, and you allow him to make war at pleasure.

From a speech at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854

When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs

another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. . . . No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent.

From a speech at Alton, Illinois, October 15, 1858

Here is one of the many things Lincoln said in his debates with Douglas:

It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

The Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

As soon as Lincoln was elected President, people began urging him to free the slaves. He believed he had no right to do so under the Constitution. But as the Civil War went on, he saw that the Union could win the war more quickly if the slaves were freed and allowed to fight with the Union troops. As Commanderin-Chief of the Army, he had a right to do whatever

was necessary to win the war. So in September 1862 he announced he was going to free the slaves wherever slaveowners were still in rebellion against the United States by the following January 1. On that day he carried out his announcement with the Emancipation Proclamation. By April it was clear that Lincoln had been right. Well over a hundred thousand Negroes had already joined the Union forces in the three months since the slaves were freed. This is part of the Proclamation:

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States:

[Here Lincoln listed the states and parts of states, and he went on:]

I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons. . . .

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

From Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

When Lincoln became President, he made a speech as all Presidents do. Several states had already seceded. Here is part of what he said:

Fellow-citizens of the United States:

In compliance with a custom as old as the government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of his office."

[Speaking of the fact that slavery existed in one section of the country but not in another, Lincoln said:]

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and

intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dis-

member or overthrow it.

[After discussing how slavery could be abolished by constitutional means, Lincoln went on to say:]

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

From Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1864

When Lincoln became President the second time, he was thinking of peace, and here is part of what he said:

Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among

ourselves, and with all nations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The facts in this book all come from other books by people who knew Abraham Lincoln or who spent a long time studying his life. Those who knew Lincoln often wrote down exactly what he said, and that is why it is possible to give his actual words, even in conversations. The books which have the most about him are the six volumes called *Abraham Lincoln*, by Carl Sandburg (Harcourt, Brace and Company), and nobody could write a new story of Lincoln without owing the greatest debt to Mr. Sandburg.

Lincoln's law partner, William H. Herndon, realized when Lincoln died how important it was to gather together all the information he could about Lincoln. With the help of Jesse W. Weik he wrote a famous biography which is known as Herndon's Life of Lincoln. Then Julia Taft Bayne—the Julia whose brothers played with the Lincoln boys in the White House—wrote Tad Lincoln's Father (Little, Brown and Company). Many, many other people made collections of Lincoln's stories which the author of The Real Book about Abraham Lincoln has consulted. Recently, Philip Van Doren Stern went through everything Lincoln himself wrote, and selected the parts most interesting for us today. These are published, together with a biography, in The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln (Modern Library).

All of these books are for grownups, and so is Albert Shaw's *Abraham Lincoln*. But Dr. Shaw's book, which is called a "Cartoon History," has a great many cartoons and pictures which are fun for anybody of any age to look at.

To these books and to many more the author—and you—

are indebted.

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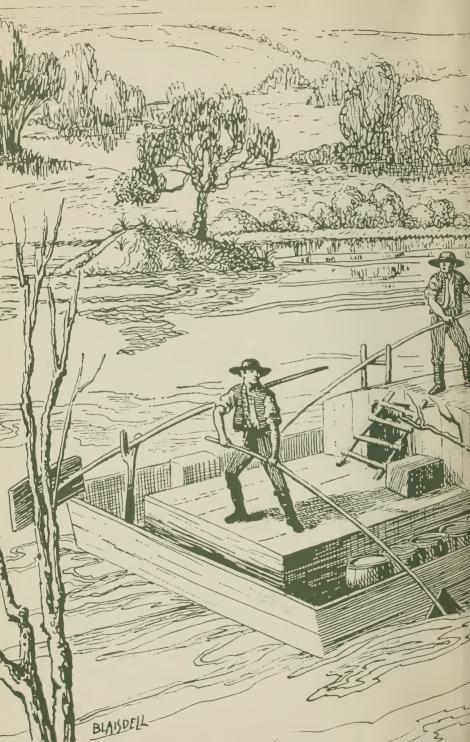
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